

GETTING IN THE GAME: MOVING THE CHURCH FROM
SPECTATOR TO PARTICIPANT THROUGH
RELIGIOUS SOCIAL JUSTICE

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
DEDICATION.....	viii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER	
1. MINISTRY FOCUS.....	5
2. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	23
Old Testament	
New Testament	
3. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	40
4. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	63
5. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	82
6. PROJECT ANALYSIS.....	93
Introduction	
Methodology	
Implementation	
Conclusions	
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	121

ABSTRACT

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by
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The context for this project is Allen Chapel AME Church, Daytona Beach, Florida. The identified problem was the lack of a viable social justice ministry to meet the relevant needs of the people. The hypothesis was that if a social justice ministry were established in the context, a reduction of social injustice would occur. The methodology was qualitative using the mixed method approach to analyze the data. A workshop on social justice, Bible studies, a sermon series, and pre and post-test questionnaires were used to gather data. The project was successful toward establishing a social justice ministry for the church.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success and final outcome of this project required a lot of guidance and support from many people and I am extremely privileged to have got this up to the completion of my project. All that I have done is only due to such supervision and support and I would not forget to thank them.

First of all, I am indebted to Almighty God for how he has blessed my family and me down through the years. When I look back over my life and see how God has brought me through situations and circumstances that people declared were impossible, but God stepped in and made the impossible possible, and all I can say is, “What an awesome God we serve!”

My deepest gratitude goes to my lovely wife Tammie L. Mugala for her patience and understanding in this undertaking. I have spent countless hours and days working on my project, and meeting with my focus group, and she has not complained much. My heartfelt thanks also goes to my son, Romaine Njavwa Mugala, for his inspiration to continue the pursuit of knowledge. He has provided so much joy and encouragement and I am grateful to God.

I would be remiss if I did not thank my Bishop, the Right Reverend Adam J. Richardson Jr., for the recommendation to do my doctoral work at United Theological Seminary and his continued encouragement on this journey. I wholeheartedly thank Rev.

Dr. Edison O. Jackson who also gave me a recommendation to go to United Theological Seminary and has always been keen to know how my studies were progressing.

It is amazing how God puts you in the right path to meet the right people who help you discern your calling. Retired Bishop Robert V. Webster started me on this journey in ministry when he served as my pastor at St. Stephen AME Church in Jacksonville, Florida and after his election as a Bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1992, Bishop Michael L. Mitchell became my pastor and mentor in ministry and I am deeply thankful to both of them.

A very special “thank you” goes out to Dr. Donnell J. Moore my Professional Associate for providing invaluable advice and helped simplify the flow of this project. You have provided immense encouragement, recommendations, and suggestions from the beginning of this project until now. And thank you for accepting nothing less than excellence from me. Rev. Dr. Cornelius S. Golden, I am truly appreciative of your intellectual and honest critique of my project and thank you for your help as Professional Associate. And what can I say about Dr. Connie Carter our faculty mentor and Dr. Angela Washington? Thank you for not only your spiritual guidance but also your scholarly review of our documents. You are appreciated more than you will ever know.

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I am also immensely thankful for the Allen Chapel AME Church family for the demonstration of love and support during these ten (10) years of ministry together. A special note of gratitude goes to context associates, Jennifer Dietz, Pamela Hamlin, Teresa Johnson, Jackie Mole and Rev. Jimmie Moore for your willingness to assist with this project, your attention to details, the numerous hours and selfless commitment in finalizing this product. My deep appreciation also goes out to Sisters LeeAnn Harris, Carolyn Bell and their team for preparing meals while we did our field work. You have demonstrated over and over again that you love God and your church with a passion. Most of you have already expressed your desire to do better in doing the work of justice and I'm grateful that this journey has not been in vain.

DEDICATION

I dedicate my project work to the memory of my beloved parents, the late Rev. Banjo Mugala and Mrs. Rodah N. Mugala whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring loudly in my ears. I have a special feeling of gratitude for the love that they gave to all ten (10) children. My father always used to remind us that whatever we could conceive in our minds, we could achieve if we only apply our selves. My mother on the other hand, even though she never received higher formal education herself, she would tell us that we were just as good as anyone else. I can see both of them looking down from the portals of heaven with joy for this milestone in my life.

The Doctor of Ministry project is also dedicated to our Faculty Mentor, Dr. Keith D. D. Lawrence, Professional Advisor Dr. Donnell J. Moore who when I felt like throwing in the towel, stood by me every step of the way encouraging and inspiring me during the focus group meetings to stay focused on the prize. This project would not have been possible without your constant support.

INTRODUCTION

The term social justice must be defined contextually in order to clearly understand its implications when used. There is a basic difference between the way society sees social justice and the way the Bible sees it. Society sees the term social justice as an effort to obtain a just society where the government is herald as its savior. On the other hand, the Christian community of faith sees social justice as individual members doing what they can to improve the quality of another person's life. The Christian community of faith also sees Christ as its Savior who will one day come and restore justice to His people.

Therefore, the development of a social justice ministry for the Allen Chapel AME church is a critical part of its growth and future sustainability and vitality. The area surrounding the church continues to be plagued with violence, crime, gangs, and other unwelcomed atrocities that reduce the quality of life for the members of the community. Although the congregation is an active participant in a local faith-based organization, the organization does not have as its vision the relevant needs of community-based concerns. Therefore, if the needs of the community surrounding the church are to be met, the church must establish a vehicle out of which vital and sustainable grassroots justice ministry can flourish and meet these needs.

In the restoration of the Holy City of Jerusalem, Nehemiah made an assessment of the devastation and destruction and then went before the people and encouraged them to

take action. He then devised a plan of action that allowed the Israelites who returned from exile to participate in a way that provided protection, hope, and unity among them. It is from this perspective that the social justice ministry is being birthed at the Allen Chapel AME church. In order for the community around the church to be restored and return to the once peaceful and safe community of its yesteryears, the church must lead the way in establishing ministries that demonstrate the desire and willingness for restoration.

Understanding that as a community of faith, God required the people to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with Him. God also requires the community of faith to be in love and fellowship with their neighbor. In prior years, the church had lost its connection with the community and now stands in a strategic position to be the difference that makes the difference in restoring the life of the community.

The church can ill-afford to do justice, love mercy, and walk with God within the safety of the walls of its facilities. The church must spill out into the community to become reconnected to the many neighbors who live there. As the church, it is next to impossible to isolate itself from the community and then expect the community to come to faith in Jesus Christ just because the building is there. The church has to extend gracious hospitality to its neighbors and at times, become uncomfortable in working with them to meet their needs. It has to also teach the value and benefits of unity in the body of Christ which over time will lead to a healthier and more vital community.

In order to prepare the congregation for social justice and social activism, this project will endeavor to preach, teach, and empower its members toward a level of sensitivity that will cause an awakening in their spirit to do something about the conditions surrounding its facility, similar to what Nehemiah did.

In years past, Allen Chapel was respected as a beacon of hope in the community when it was located on the campus of Bethune Cookman College (University). During that time, the church and the college formed a collaborative partnership where members, students, and faculty grew together in mutuality and spiritual fortitude. When the church moved to its current location, it seemed to have lost its focus, and in many ways expected the college to come to it rather than reaching out and meeting the college and the community half-way toward maintaining a healthy relationship. Yes, the church is still a prominent institution in the community, however, it has done little in the form of outreach and social justice ministry to demonstrate the power of God to overcome the obstacles, divisions, and barriers that separate church, college, and community from forging a bond that cannot be broken.

Chapter one, Ministry Focus, will summarize my faith journey and how this journey prepared me for the work in the context. It was based on the work that God was doing in my life that enabled me to identify specific problems in my context and provide a viable methodological model for resolving the problem.

Chapters two, three, four, and five are the foundational chapters. The foundational chapters provided sound evidence that the problem in the current context has existed in various forms in the past. Biblically, social justice was a central issue in the books of Micah and Luke. The book of Micah addresses the issue of what is required by God in order for there to be a just society; do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God. The book of Luke addresses the issue of being a Good Samaritan. In this section of scripture Luke identifies what justice looks like when a stranger comes along and we provide assistance that was greatly needed, possibly saving a person's life.

The historical foundations showcase how the case for justice and equality has been a struggle down through the ages. This chapter looked at significant social justice movements after World War II such as the conformity movement, the civil rights movement, the woman's movement, the countercultural movement, the gay rights movement, and others. These movements demonstrated the innate desire of all people to have a place at the table of equality and justice.

Various theological methodologies were queried to look at justice from the perspective of being in relationship with God. Biblical theology, Wesleyan, Calvinist, public theology, restorative justice, liberation and Black theology were all used to make the case that God is a God of justice and all theology at some point speaks to the justice of God in creation.

Theoretically, we will examine various ways and methodologies that have been used to establish justice communities and justice ministries in society. We will look at educational models, social models, social disability models, and community models toward establishing a model that best works in the context of Allen Chapel AME church.

Chapter six, Project Analysis looks at the project model, fieldwork, and data analysis. From these sections, we were able to draw findings that substantiated the hypothesis that if a social justice ministry was established in the context, a reduction of social injustice will occur.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

I was born on October 10, in the year of our Lord 1962, in Mufulira, Zambia, Central Africa. My late father Banjo M. Mugala worked for the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines and my late mother was a full-time housewife and worked tirelessly to raise her ten children; five boys, and five girls. My maternal grandmother also lived in Mufulira, which allowed us to spend a lot of weekends with her. She worked for one of the mine hospitals, which allowed her to often bring us nice toys that were given to her by diplomats that she worked for. Our family was a close-knit family and we basically shared all things together. We lived in a three-bedroom house where the boys shared one bedroom and the girls shared the other. We all grew up in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, a liberating and reconciling church. It was here; that I believe my life started shaping me into the person that I am becoming. My family, culture, education, and church have played a major role in making me who I am today. This synergy document will allow me to briefly talk about the various events and situations in my life that transformed me through faithfully trusting in God.

Both my father and mother were active in the church and required all their children to be involved also. Church was a very central part of our lives. My father served as one of the leaders in the Church. My mother always worked with the missionary women and the Sunday school. If my father could not take us to church, my mother

always found a way to get us there and back home. It was a good three to four miles to church and most of the times we had to walk. I found myself involved in a lot of church activities such as Youth Choir, Young People's Division, and Church school. I always enjoyed the biblical stories told by our Sunday school teacher, Mr. Samuel Mwansa who was very dramatic in his presentation. Young people always looked forward to his class. I made sure that I paid attention in Sunday school because at dinner time that evening, my father would go around the table to ask each one of us what we learned.

I wanted to make my parents proud, so I would tell everything I learned, and the things I saw at church. I would even ask my parents questions about things that were mind boggling to me like, "Why did God tell Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let my people go, and then hardened Pharaoh's heart." We had some powerful discussions around the dining room table. The most memorable times growing up in my parents' house was when I could hear my father pray for all of his children, calling each one of us by name. I believe I am who I am today because my father prayed for us. There were many times that my brothers, sisters and me got into trouble in spite of our good upbringing, but the prayers of my father covered us. As I grew older, I found myself taking on leadership roles in the Young People's Division of our church and the youth social justice movement of our state. Even though Zambia had been freed from the British Colonialism, there were still a lot of injustices that we experienced for an extended period of time. There were certain neighborhoods and certain schools that we were not allowed to attend. This made us the advocates of our time and generation. We would rise and speak out against the mistreatment in our country. Because of my involvement in these organizations I was privileged to travel to different parts of the

country and other neighboring countries where we worked with other youth leaders preparing them for effective church and community leadership.

In school, I participated in many extracurricular activities such as track and field events and I always enjoyed playing soccer with my classmates in and out of school. As a matter of fact, one of my classmates went on to be a professional soccer player and played for the Zambian team. When it came to academics, I always strived to be the best student in class and found myself connecting with classmates who seemed to be focused on where they were going. My oldest brother who is now deceased always inspired me to excel in school if I wanted to have a better life in the future.

After completing secondary school in Mufulira, Zambia I decided to go to Kitwe Teachers' Training College (KTTC) and train as a teacher because there was nothing else for me to do. Even though I felt a calling upon my life into full time ministry, I ran from it because I saw what men and women of the cloth and their families had to go through just to survive. While matriculating at KTTC, I met my first serious girlfriend named Wazilinda. We would spend a lot of time together, but we were too young at the time to even think about getting married. Upon my graduation from KTTC, I was assigned by the Zambian government to teach in some remote places in the Northern Province of Zambia, this ended my relationship with Wazilinda because she could not see herself moving to the remote areas.

The people in those places were very kind and caring and most times the men would invite me to go with them on hunting trips. The men would talk about all the different kinds of creatures they encountered while hunting and this made me scared. I spent three years working as a teacher and community organizer, and all the while

actively serving in the church. I served as the First Vice President for the 17th Episcopal YPD and had the opportunity to impact numerous young adults from all across the district, which covered six different countries.

In 1988, I was elected to serve as a youth delegate to the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, which was held in Fort Worth, Texas. I was excited that I was coming to the United States for the first time. I had never travelled outside the continent of Africa before. So, in early July of 1988, I bid farewell to my mother, father, brothers, and sisters not knowing when I would see them again. We flew about 9,000 miles from Lusaka, Zambia to New York City and connected from there to Dallas, Texas where the hospitality committee of the 10th Episcopal District cordially welcomed us. The temperature in Texas was unbelievable. We had just left Zambia, and it was cold (winter season) and when we arrived in Dallas, it was 103 degrees (summer).

We were housed in the Holiday Inn, which was about one block from the Convention Center where the meetings were being held. It was an experience that I will never forget, being in the General Conference of the AME Church for the first time. There was some melodious singing by the choirs, great preaching by the Bishops, and then, there were those who were campaigning to become the next Bishops of the church. This was so political that it felt like we were electing the next president of the United States. There were candidates who were cussing and ready to fight just to get elected. Thank God for grace.

During the General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, I was privileged to meet people from all over the world, and it was fascinating to see the church at work. One of those persons that I met was the then President of Edward Waters' College (EWC), the

late Dr. Cecil Wayne Cone of Jacksonville, Florida who asked me if I was interested in pursuing higher education, to which I responded, “Yes, if the opportunity presented itself.” Little did I know that God was orchestrating my destiny. The president offered me a tuition scholarship to attend EWC, which I gladly accepted. At the end of the General Conference, I was introduced to Reverend Robert Vaughn Webster, who was the Senior Pastor of St. Stephen AME Church in Jacksonville, who later became my father in the ministry. After the General Conference, I moved to Jacksonville and joined St. Stephen AME Church while matriculating at Edward Waters’ College. To be honest, I felt like I was not a part of the EWC family. I had difficulties making friends, even some of the professors made my experience at EWC very difficult, I guess because I talked differently. There were many times that I felt like quitting and going back home, but when I talked to my father, he would always say to me, “Son, hang in there because quitters don’t win and winners don’t quit.” Most of the time I was alone and recited my father’s words to myself, until my second year in college, that is when I met Hudson Williamson, a brother from the Commonwealth of the Bahamas who became a very close associate. But, it was here at St. Stephen that I started noticing the presence of God in my life. God brought people into my life and even those who did not know me became a treasured source of inspiration and support.

Reverend Webster served as a mentor to me and I shared with him my desire to go into the ministry. In January 1989, I was given an opportunity to preach my initial sermon before the congregation and ultimately admitted to the East Annual Conference of the Eleventh (11th) Episcopal District of the AME Church. Through Reverend Webster, I was inspired to pledge Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. It was also here at Saint Stephen

that in 1990 I met a lady that would later become my wife (Vonda). We dated for a couple of years and got married in 1992. That same year in July, my father in the ministry Reverend Robert V. Webster was elected one of the Bishops of our Zion and assigned to my home District (17th Episcopal District). In September, the Reverend Michael L. Mitchell became the Senior Pastor of St. Stephen AME Church and brought a renewed passion to the worship services. Almost every worship service people were walking down the aisle and giving their hand to the preacher and their heart to God. Reverend Mitchell also served as an inspiration. After graduating from Edward Waters' College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting, my plan was to go to Florida State University and get my MBA in Accounting; but God changed the direction of my life.

Bishop Frank C. Cumming called me and encouraged me to go to Turner Theological Seminary at ITC. My wife, stepdaughter (Charity), and me moved to Atlanta in August of 1993 and I enrolled in the Interdenominational Theological Center, a school that brings together students and faculty with diverse faith perspectives. This school also has a history of civic engagement and a commitment to social justice. This was the most enlightening time of my life because I was challenged by professors not to take the Bible literary but to dig deeper and ask difficult questions. I worked as the Housing Director for Turner Theological Seminary and served as Assistant Pastor at Antioch AME Church, located in Decatur, Georgia at that time.

At Antioch, I worked closely with the senior pastor in implementing some of the programs of the church. When the need arose to move the church to an area with opportunities to grow, we decided to search in the Stone Mountain, Georgia. Area. We

found an all white church that was on sale because middle class Blacks were moving into the area. With the blessings of Bishop Donald G. K. Ming, Antioch Church was able to relocate to Stone Mountain. From there the church just grew in numbers and infrastructure. In 1995, the Lord blessed us with a son (Romaine). He became a joy in our lives. His coming into our lives helped me to become even more involved in family activities. I would take him from time to time to places and things that I personally had missed out on growing up.

In May of 1996, I graduated from Turner Theological Seminary at ITC with a Master of Divinity Degree with a concentration in Old Testament Studies, and I was ready to serve. My family and I moved back to Jacksonville, Florida to wait for our assignment. While we were waiting, I needed to work to support my family. I have been blessed with people that God has put in my path to help me get to where God is trying to take me. My classmate, Mark Griffin was running his CPA firm in Jacksonville. He gave me an opportunity to work with him until the Bishop gave me the assignment. This was a great learning experience, which helped me to polish up on my organizational and business skills.

In September 1996, I was assigned to pastor a medium size congregation near Tampa, Florida. When I arrived on that first Sunday, the first thing I did was go straight to the altar to pray because I really did not know what to expect. I went and joined everyone in Sunday school and it was interesting to see more adults in Sunday school and almost no children except for my superintendent's three grandchildren. That morning, I said to myself, "We are going to get all the children that we can find and bring them in Sunday school." It was important to me that children learn the Bible just as I was taught

growing up in Mufulira, Zambia. The worship celebration started at 11:00 am and we had a powerful service. Everybody seemed to have enjoyed the service. After the service, an older gentleman walked up to me and said, “You talk kind of funny, are you from Jamaica?” to which I responded, “No sir, I am originally from Africa.” In disbelief he said to me, “I have never met an African before” to which I responded, “You’ve just met your first African.” He smiled and walked away. A lot of members came, shook their new pastor’s hand, and enthusiastically welcomed my family and me to Mt. Zion. I could tell that they were glad that we were there.

The church had been through a lot of turmoil and needed healing and restoration. Because the church did not have adequate financial resources, I had to get another job to help take care of my family and support my parents back home. I worked as a teacher and counselor for an Alternative School in Pasco County. In October 1997 right after my birthday, I received a phone call that my mother had passed away. Here I am over nine thousand miles away from home and I did not know what to do. I knew that she had been battling some health issues for a while, but I did not know that it was that serious. I shared the sad news with my officers and they surrounded me with their support and prayers. A few weeks later, I went home only to find out my mother was already buried. This was probably one of the lowest points in my life at that time. My father was not looking well either, after talking with him and sharing with other family members, I decided that the best thing was to bring my father with me to the US and get him the medical help that he needed. He came and lived with us for approximately a year, taking him from one doctor to another until he finally passed away. This was devastating to me to lose both parents, whom I loved so much within a year’s time. But then, it was

comforting to know that I was not going through this all by myself. I had my immediate family, the church, and my colleagues in ministry standing right there with me. Bishop Frank C. Cummings who was the Presiding Prelate of the 11th Episcopal District at that time came and shared with the family in the homegoing service and helped me take the remains of my father back home.

I served Mount Zion, Dade City for about four years and in September 2000 I was transferred to Marianna, Florida to pastor St. James AME Church. The Lord did some remarkable things at St. James through our work. The church grew numerically and spiritually. But, it was also here in Marianna that I experienced a lot of pain when the marriage that I had invested in for many years fell apart. My children had to deal with the pain of not having both parents at home and that pain coupled with the tremendous responsibility of ministering to the community of faith that I served was overwhelming to me. I soon discovered that God was my only source and I quickly learned how to seek God for strength to deal with my crisis. This experience taught me to be more compassionate to those individuals and families that unfortunately experience break up. I became what Henri J. M. Nouwen calls, *The Wounded Healer*. In this book, Nouwen raises the question, “Who can listen to a story of loneliness and despair without taking the risk of experiencing similar pains in his/her own heart and even losing his/her precious peace of mind? In short he asks: “Who can take away suffering without entering it?”

In November 2002, the Bishop called me and told me he was transferring me to the soaring South Annual Conference. Initially he told me he was going to send me to St. Paul, Fort Pierce but unfortunately things did not work out as planned. He, instead, ended up sending me to New Bethel in Clewiston, Florida, a small town in the glades area near

Lake Okeechobee. I served this community for eighteen months. We developed new ministries to equip and empower the members to serve their church and community, then the Bishop called me and told me I was being moved to St. Paul, Fort Pierce where I was initially supposed to go. Again, God in His infinite power blessed the work of our hands that this church grew and became the center of community life. Many ministries were implemented and developed to meet the needs of the church and community. My divorce from Vonda was finalized in 2004, and thanks be to God, the leadership at St. Paul was very supportive to ensure a smooth transition for all of us. In 2006, I met the former Tammie Bean while serving in Fort Pierce and we were later joined in holy matrimony in December 2007. After serving this community for four years, I was assigned to Allen Chapel AME Church, Daytona Beach, Florida. Today, I realize that it has been the hand of God working in my life that has helped to prepare me for greater challenges and triumphs.

The history of Daytona Beach goes back to the Native Americans long before the Spanish inhabited its shores in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Timucuan Indians were the Native Americans who called the Daytona Beach area home, and they erected fortified villages near the sea.¹

Seafood was definitely a part of the Native American diet, as can be evidenced by the middens, or refuse piles that they left behind. The Tomoka Mounds and Middens archaeological site is the best place to see the Timucuan Indian's burial and refuse mounds, and you can also find other mounds in the area. At the Canaveral National Seashore, for instance, the tallest shell mound in the country can be found. Turtle Mound

¹ Daytona Beach History, accessed June 24, 2017 <http://www.destination360.com/north-america/us/florida/daytona-beach/history>.

tops out at around 40 feet tall, and it is believed to have been a shell dump that was used by the Timucuan Indians for more than 600 years.²

As is true of many natives in the Americas, war and disease eventually combined to bring the Timucuan Indians down, and by 1700, there were only about 1,000 remaining. The history of Daytona Beach took one of its most significant turns earlier on in 1565, which is when the Spanish established their Florida capital in nearby St. Augustine. Missions would soon be established, and the effort to convert the Timucuan people to Christianity began thereafter. Though Spain controlled Florida for a couple hundred years, the province was never more than a minor part of their far-reaching empire. In the 1700s and 1800s, the Spanish settlers maintain plantations in the state, as did some British newcomers, which can be evidenced by places like The Bulow Plantation Ruins Historic State Park, which can definitely offer some insight into Daytona Beach history.³

The Bulow Plantation Ruins Historic State Park boasts the Sugar Mill Ruins, which figures on the National Register of Historic Sites. Other ruins here include a small house, remnants of the plantation house's foundations, and slave cabins. Most of the plantation was destroyed during the Second Seminole War in 1836, which helped to delay the transfer of Florida from Spain to the United States. Florida was actually acquired by the United States in 1821, though it would not be until after the Second Seminole War that the new state really starting taking to its new identity. After the Civil

² Daytona Beach History.

³ Daytona Beach History.

War, tourism became a rather prominent industry, and it's been that way in destinations like Daytona Beach ever since.⁴

The city was founded in 1870 and by 1876, it was incorporated; and ten years later, the arrival of the St. Johns & Halifax River Railway put the city on the fast track to becoming one of the state's featured destinations. The American tycoon and railroad magnate, Henry Morrison Flagler, purchased the railroad in 1889, and he was instrumental in making the state's east coast popular with travelers. Daytona Beach was one of the top stops along the Florida East Coast Railway, and it would not be long until it also became a featured place to race. Around the turn of the century, the city's wide, hard-packed beaches started attracting automobile and motorcycle racers, who came to test many new inventions. It was in 1902 that racing began in Daytona Beach, and in 1936, the famed Daytona Beach Road Course started hosting races. This racing course is integral to the racing history of Daytona Beach.⁵

The Daytona Beach Road Course, which featured both road and beach sections, would figure as the city's main racetrack for decades, until a man by the name of Bill France Sr. started planning a new stock car racing association. France founded NASCAR in 1948, and by 1959, the Daytona International Speedway opened, replacing the Beach and Road Course. The city has never been the same. Every February, NASCAR holds the Daytona 500 here, which is the biggest stock car race in the world. The first Daytona 500

⁴ Daytona Beach History.

⁵ Daytona Beach History.

race at the Speedway happened in 1959 and Lee Petty won it. Lee Petty's son, Richard, won the Daytona 500 on seven occasions, which is more than any other driver.⁶

Today, the Daytona Beach area entertains nearly eight million influential visitors each year. These visitors, who influence friends and family with their vacation stories, come from around the world to relax and enjoy the area's many treasures, both old and new.

Daytona Beach not only inspired those who wanted to test the limits of speed, but also those who have desired to test the limits of society. Daytona Beach's role in the history of civil rights is significant. On March 17, 1946, Jackie Robinson played in the first integrated spring training baseball game with the Montreal Royals, a farm team of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Later he became the first African-American to play in the Major Leagues. Today, Robinson's name identifies the stadium in Daytona Beach and a life-size statue of him has been cast at the entrance.⁷

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune established a school in 1904 to educate the daughters of African-American workers on the railroads called Bethune-Cookman College (now Bethune-Cookman University) and was later appointed to government positions by Calvin Coolidge, Franklin Roosevelt, and Harry Truman. Today, the school has an enrollment of 2,300 students, and visitors can learn about her life's achievements at her former home, now a museum on the University's sprawling campus.⁸

⁶ Daytona Beach History.

⁷ Daytona Beach, "Local History," accessed June 24, 2017, <https://www.daytonabeach.com/resources/history/>.

⁸ Daytona Beach, "Local History."

In looking at selected demographic facts, you will find the following:

Population Demographics

- The city's residents are 50.0% men and 50.0% women.
- The population of Daytona Beach is 61,005.
- 88.8% of people in Daytona Beach, FL were born U.S. citizens, while 11.2% were born outside of the country.
- 66.8% of people in Daytona Beach, FL are single and 33.2% are married.
- The top three races (in population) are: White [57.8%], Black or African American [35.4%] and Hispanic [6.2%].
- 83.4% of the population graduated high school or have a GED. 19.8% have college degrees.⁹

Economy

- Typical commute times differ throughout the city. However, overall 78.7% of works commute under 25 minutes daily, 13.9% commute 25-45 minutes, and 7.5% have a commute greater than 45 minutes.
- At the time of the last census, the Daytona Beach, unemployment rate was 11.3%.
- In Daytona Beach the median worker income is \$17,884. This is lower than the national average of \$29,701.
- Daytona Beach, FL workers work 36/hrs per week on average.
- The poverty rate for Daytona Beach, FL is 24.5%.¹⁰

Homes

- The median age of homes in Daytona Beach, FL is forty-two years old.
- \$1,316 a month is the typical owner cost for a home with a mortgage.

⁹ USA City Facts, "Daytona Beach, Florida," accessed June 24, 2017, <http://www.usacityfacts.com/fl/volusia/daytona-beach/>.

¹⁰ USA City Facts, "Daytona Beach, Florida."

- Homes have 5 rooms on average.
- Rentals are 35.1% of homes and 37.5% of homes are occupied by their owners.¹¹

When I arrived at Allen Chapel the first of December 2007, I quickly discovered that I had been assigned to a church that needed healing and restoration. This church had experienced a lot of brokenness from previous administrations. We implemented and developed ministries, taught the word of God, and continued to preach Christ's liberating gospel. Some of the people who left because of the hurt slowly started to make their way back to Allen. In our efforts of engaging the church and the community to begin finding solutions to the problems that plague our communities such as; crime and drugs, racial differences, mental illness, jobs and affordable housing, I slowly found myself passionate about social justice and prophetic preaching. As pastor, I find myself encouraging our membership not to be silent when they see injustice but to be the voice for the voiceless. Our church works closely with the NAACP and Fighting Against Injustice Towards Harmony (FAITH). As co-chair for FAITH, I am always trying to find ways to bring our community together to solve problems because I believe that alone we are limited in what we can do, but together we are powerful.

Four years ago, the members of FAITH voted to address the epidemic of homelessness in Daytona Beach and Volusia County. In our research, we found that although there were many services and outreach ministries that help the homeless, there are no programs designed to address the root cause of homelessness in our community, and no centralized location where all governmental and non-profit groups can coordinate their efforts. Over five thousand people are homeless in Volusia County. Many suffer

¹¹ USA City Facts, "Daytona Beach, Florida."

from substance abuse and mental illness, while some are simply down on their luck.

Because there is no countywide shelter, these individuals are routinely arrested and jailed instead of housed and treated. The average homeless person in our county is arrested eleven times a year; often for sleeping in public, or simply having no place to go. It costs taxpayers two thousand dollars every time someone is arrested. But arrests themselves are just one piece of the burden homelessness places on taxpayers. The cost of keeping someone in Volusia County jail is over \$100.00 a night. Right now, this is how we handle the problem. FAITH knew there must be a much better way to deal with the problem of homelessness.

We found that in Pinellas County, Florida, cities had united to fund Pinellas Safe Harbor: a countywide homeless assistance center that offers the homeless not only food and shelter, but also case management. Substance abuse therapy, career training and primary and mental healthcare are provided. Instead of arresting the homeless for minor offenses, they are given the opportunity of rehabilitation at Safe Harbor. Patients can stay as long as they need at Pinellas Safe Harbor, but the average homeless person who is treated is placed in stable housing within forty-three days. Instead of spending over \$100.00 every night they are in jail, it cost Pinellas Safe Harbor only seventeen dollars to house and provide the treatment and dignity they deserve. Law enforcement in Pinellas benefit greatly from no longer having to perpetually arrest the homeless, the Pinellas County Sheriff has traveled to other counties in Florida, promoting the Safe Harbor concept.

In March of 2015 about 1,200 members of FAITH gathered at our Annual Action Assembly to ask the County Council to allocate four million dollars in construction costs

and land to help. They agreed. Many non-profits in the community have already committed to coordinate their efforts at Volusia Safe Harbor. Halifax Hospital, Stewart Marchman Act, and Halifax Urban Ministries are among the many that have agreed to offer their services at Safe Harbor. The proposed site is next to a Votran Bus stop, which would provide transportation. But Volusia Safe Harbor will not become a reality unless the cities in Volusia County join together to fund the operating costs of the shelter, including Port Orange. Daytona Beach has already allocated seven-hundred thousand in their budget for their share of the operating costs and eight other municipalities have formally passed resolutions of support for Safe Harbor. Some city leaders in Port Orange contended homelessness was not a problem for their city. However, the Catholic Church of the Epiphany in Port Orange was forced to put a lock on their twenty-four hour chapel because their members became too afraid to pray there after some homeless individuals began panhandling and vandalizing the sanctuary. When children are too afraid to walk to school and when church-members are too afraid to pray at their places of worship, We Have A Problem.

FAITH knew there must be a more Christian and fiscally responsible response to deal with homelessness. The FAITH community realizes that we care too much about the homeless problem in our city and our county that we need as many people as possible to support us to challenge our elected officials to find solutions to this problem. If we do not stand up, who will? It was this realization that moved me to begin mobilizing the members of our church for the work of justice.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church has always been a justice seeking, justice working church, and so I thought getting the membership of Allen to be involved

in the work of FAITH was going to be an easy process. To my dismay, I found that only a small percentage of the membership was willing to passionately get involved and do the work of justice. The larger percentage of membership had every excuse in the world why they could not get involved. Some of them declared, they had done that before and they did not see any difference it was making in our church and community. Others acted like it really was not their problem to deal with. Therefore, it becomes my responsibility as a leader to find ways to get every member to seriously start thinking about what the Lord requires of us as believers.

Chapter two, Biblical Foundations will deal with the Old Testament book of Micah and the New Testament book of Luke as we continue to examine the issue of social justice ministries and their importance in the church and community.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

The scriptures are a primary foundation for understanding issues of grace, mercy, and justice and the expectations of the people of God living out their lives in community with one another. In the Old Testament, God can be seen as a God of justice throughout the biblical narrative. God comes to the aid of the widow, the orphan, and the barren in addition to those who are weak and powerless. In the New Testament, Jesus and Paul are the heroes of justice. Jesus constantly stands against the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the religious leaders of his day by exemplifying the spirit of the law rather than the legalistic approach the people were accustomed to following. While establishing churches throughout Asia Minor, Paul is the champion of the have-nots. With each of his missionary journeys, Paul sought to bring provisions and an offering for those who had little and compelled his followers to care for others while teaching the importance of sharing all things in common. There are many texts within the holy scriptures that speak to the need for justice, however, for our purposes, we will look at the Old Testament book of Micah and the New Testament book of Luke to exemplify the biblical basis for justice and activism.

Old Testament

Before we dive into an exegetical analysis of the book of Micah generally and chapter 6:8 specifically, it is important that we make the distinction between the prophet whose name is Micah and the book of Micah, which is included with the prophetic books of the Old Testament. Although Micah was a prophet of God, very little is known about him and his family. What we do know from the book of Micah is that he was from Moreshheth, in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.¹

According to the text, Micah served the LORD during the reign of Kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah. He served the LORD just after the destruction of Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel to the time of the Assyrian invasions of Judah in 701 BC. That would place his ministry during the period of Assyrian dominance of the region. It would also make him a younger contemporary of Isaiah. It is not surprising that there is a great deal of similarity between the Book of Micah and the first section of Isaiah. While there are various themes in the book, Micah the prophet is remembered as the prophet of authentic worship/service to God and social justice.²

The book of Micah is more complex and encompasses more than just the man Micah. The book of Micah reflects the ongoing ministry of Micah the prophet and the work he does in community with the people. It reflects the changing times and the traditions of the people as Micah speaks prophetic words that help the people make the transition from the days of old to new ways of living in community. As the Assyrians threatened the very survival of the Southern Kingdom, questions like “What exactly did it

¹ Dennis Bracher, “The Book of Micah,” accessed May 3, 2017, <http://www.crivoice.org/oks/micah.html>.

² Bracher, “The Book of Micah.”

mean to be God's people in history? What kind of God did they serve and what exactly did God expect of his people?" were more than idle speculation. They took on urgency in light of the prophetic preaching that drove to the very core of Israel's existence. And, of course in the background were always the questions of whether they would survive as a nation, and what they should become if they did.³

Micah consistently proclaimed that a change, a return to faithfulness to God, was essential if the Southern Kingdom was to have any future. These are also the questions that the current context must grapple with if they are to emerge as the people of God who understand their purpose in life and who they are in the face of social unrest, political inequity, and a deteriorating community. It is this message of both warning of impending consequences and a hope for the future that allowed the preaching of the prophet Micah to enter Israel's tradition as a dynamic witness to God. Micah's trust in God and a hope for a redeemed future has become a favorite way to express the Christian understanding of how God enters history in saving ways.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers.⁴

Prior to getting to the pericope under investigation (6:8), we must chronicle what was going on during the time of the text for God to compel the Israelites to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God. By way of summary review, the Southern

³ Bracher, "The Book of Micah."

⁴ Micah 5:3-5, New Standard Revised Version. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references in this document are from the NRSV.

Kingdom of Judah lived in sin that was detestable to God and in violation of the covenant that God made with them. Despite the warning of other prophets, the Israelites continued in a life of sin causing God to bring a case against them for violating the covenant.

As God makes his case against the Israelites, He calls forth the mountains to be witnesses of their sin and breach of the covenant. The literary purpose of bringing a suit against the Israelites was to create a dramatic setting for the audience.⁵ As God goes about making his case, instead of attacking the people of Israel with contempt, betrayal, indifference, and a lack of responsibility, God begins with questioning the Israelites regarding their complaints against Him; He could have aggressively confronted them regarding how He had rescued them from slavery in Egypt and had given them a land in which to live and develop. Instead, God takes the approach of asking, "How have I offended you (v 3). Verse 4 begins with a very interesting play on words; a word that sounds the same as the verb "to offend" or "to afflict." The verb "to offend" in Hebrew sounds something like *heletika*, whereas the verb "take, release" sounds like *heelitika*. In fact, God is saying: "I did not offend you, I brought you up." Through questions and then a statement, God seeks for the people to reconsider.⁶

Chapter 6 makes a change in God's argument. Here, God gives evidence that the people seemed to have forgotten everything that He has done for them. Historical amnesia emerges from the Israelites as their response to God comes from a position of power. They come before God with a haughty attitude, with the intent to bribe, haggle, and bargain with God over something that ultimately is not negotiable. Then the people challenge God, seeking to ridicule him, say: "With what shall I approach the LORD?"

⁵ Voth, "What does god expect of us?" 302.

⁶ Voth, "What does god expect of us?" 303.

This is not an innocent question; nor is it a question seeking information. It is a question that tries to provoke. And before there is the possibility of a response, the people offer a number of alternatives, always with the intention of bargaining.⁷

Not only did the Israelites have selective amnesia regarding what God has done for them, based on their response to God, they also forgot who God is in their lives. In response to the haughty reply of the Israelites to God, God ignores the question and makes one of His most significant statements; do justice, love loyalty, and walk humbly with God. What does this mean? In principle this has much more to do with living a life faithful to God, which in turn will make us more human and thus better reflect the image of God given to each human being by the Creator of all things. That is, biblical justice begins by understanding that God is a God who loves justice and solidarity. The justice of God is caring and compassionate, and this is active, not passive. This new understanding of God can inspire us to live, practice, and do justice.⁸

What Does The Lord Require: Do Justice

How is Israel to come before the Lord, when they have wandered so far away and broken the covenant? What can they do to restore the relationship that has been fractured by their own unfaithfulness? As Walter Brueggemann points out in his essay, verses 6-7 leading up to this well-known passage present a series of inappropriate answers to this question, escalating to the offer of the first-born child to pay for the "sin of my soul."

⁷ Voth, "What does god expect of us?" 304.

⁸ Voth, "What does god expect of us?" 305-6.

God rejects all of these overtures and instead gives three requirements: do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.⁹

The first command that the prophet delivers to the people of Israel seems simple: "do justice," or in some versions, "act justly." Do "*Mispat*." *Mispat* in Hebrew scripture describes both God's and some human activity. It is connected with caring for those who are poor and unable to care for themselves. God's justice, God's *mispat*, is manifested not in public displays of piety, but in care for the neighbor, in simple acts of clothing and feeding and setting free those who are oppressed and poor. Prophetic texts like Micah show that failure to exercise God's justice in providing for others brings the consequence of God's wrath, even upon the chosen people.¹⁰

Mispat fully understood in the book of Micah shows clearly the contrast that the prophet offers. God rejects the visible sacrifices that the people offer, and instead calls them back to justice, which means caring for the poor and needy, the widow, and orphan. This is nothing other than the second table of the law, which explicitly connects care of the neighbor with devotion to God. What does the Lord require? Provide for your neighbor, says the Lord through Micah. Stop offering sacrifices to me and start offering sustenance to those who need it most.¹¹

Mispat is a sharp critique of the ways humans seek to encounter God and a sharp critique of some human efforts at worship. Although we do not offer God burnt offerings as sacrifices, we do seek to bring God our best offerings of music, visual arts, and

⁹ Martha L. Moore-Keish, "'Do justice': Micah 6:8," *Journal For Preachers* 33, no. 4 (2010): 20, accessed July 14, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

¹⁰ Moore-Keish, "'Do justice': Micah 6:8," 21.

¹¹ Moore-Keish, "'Do justice': Micah 6:8," 21.

elegantly composed prayers and sermons. Preachers and other worship leaders invest great time and energy into public worship in efforts to attract worshipers and please God. Micah provides a critique of such efforts, reminding us that the point is loving our neighbor, not offering more and more impressive sacrifices.¹²

Although Micah does not condemn all worship of God, he does rebuke worship that is misguided and takes the focus from God and place it on ourselves. He identifies that according to verses 6-7, the focus should not be on the one making the sacrifice but to the well-being of the neighbor. When the people concentrated on themselves, they consume vast resources rather than devoting these resources on those who need it most. The sacrifices listed in verses 6-7 draw attention to the one sacrificing, and one does not contribute to the care and well-being of the neighbor, but consumes vast resources rather than devoting those resources to those who need it most. What Micah is saying to the church in the twenty-first century is that we need to reflect on how we spend the resources on the church to ensure that those who need it most is served prior to giving to ourselves in lavish worship and things that do not bring glory to God. In this way, worship and justice need not be portrayed as enemies, but as two terms that require each other. God's justice is the originating point and the criterion of worship; worship proclaims this justice and prepares us to go out and do justice in response.¹³

What Does The Lord Require: Love Mercy

We will now move from Mispat, which is care for the neighbor, in simple acts of clothing, feeding, and setting free those who are oppressed and poor to *Hesed*. How can

¹² Moore-Keish, "'Do justice': Micah 6:8," 21.

¹³ Moore-Keish, "'Do justice': Micah 6:8," 21.

God "require" us to "love mercy"? Biblical *hesed* is often rendered "mercy," but sometimes "loving kindness" and "goodness." In the NRSV, there are about one hundred fifty occurrences of "mercy" and fifty for "compassion." *Hesed* is defined basically as aid rendered to the miserable, particularly a miserable person in debt. And yet here is the remarkable point: in scripture, mercy is almost totally a divine, rather than a human, attribute although there are notable examples of mercy as a human endeavor. Joseph showed mercy to his brothers who turned up in Egypt looking for food (Gn 43:14). Jesus makes mercy a characteristic of life in the kingdom; those who show mercy will be rewarded by God's mercy (Mt 5:7). Luke commends mercy specifically as a way to imitate God: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36). Jesus tells the story of the unmerciful servant, commending us to be merciful to the miserable even as God is merciful to us (Mt 18:38). It is also significant that these references to humans doing mercy are numerically few when compared to the multiple passages that marvel at the mercy of God.¹⁴

In scripture God who created Israel is providentially merciful to all creatures, but toward humans, God is particularly merciful in forgiving sins. According to Micah 6:8, the Israelites had sinned against God by breaking God's covenant with them. Rather than punish the Israelites, God showed mercy towards them. God is universally acclaimed as "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex 34:6; Ps 86:15; 103:8 RSV). The New Testament continues this very Jewish assertion of a merciful God who is "rich in mercy" (Eph 2:4-5), the "father of mercies" (1 Cor 1:3). God's mercy is principally experienced as God's gracious forgiveness of humanity's sin,

¹⁴ William H. Willmon, "Falling in love with mercy," *Journal For Preachers* 33, no. 4 (2010): 25, accessed July 14, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

Christ himself being the culmination, the embodiment not so much of God's righteousness, but of God's mercy.¹⁵

What Does The Lord Require: Walk Humbly With God

The final command given by Micah was to "walk humbly with God." Walking in the Bible is a metaphor for a life journey or a life performance. Being on the way is a life chance and a life performance. It refers to Torah obedience and is transposed in the New Testament into discipleship as Christians are followers of the way, the way of Torah, the way of Jesus, the way of well-being. Decisions are always being made about the paths and their different outcomes. In our Micah passage, Israel is summoned to a path of "justice" and "kindness." That opens two questions: *How* to walk? With whom to walk?¹⁶

Walking humbly means to be on the path with them, to be in relation to them and with reference to them on the way. Thus, the phrasing of Micah answers the question "How to walk" by calling attention to the need and inescapability of the others who walk with us on the path of life. Indeed God requires that we walk with the other. Bruce Ellis Benson writes:

The Christian can only offer them [the teachings of Christ] in a spirit of deep humility, precisely because they are examples of being truly humble, of being dependent on one another, of loving even those who do not love us back. Of course, even these examples must be offered up in political discourse only in a spirit of respect and with a willingness to dialogue with the other, rather than starting by focusing on *me*, the focus begins on the other. Of course this is fully in line with what Jesus says. His injunctions are what one does *in response to the other*—whether the widow, the stranger, the enemy, or the one who demands one's clothing. In regard to these last two, Jesus in effect says, "Do the opposite of

¹⁵ Willmon, "Falling in love with mercy," 26.

¹⁶ Walter Brueggemann, "Walk humbly with your God: Micah 6:8," *Journal For Preachers* 33, no. 4 (2010): 14, accessed July 14, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

what you would be inclined to do"—instead of hating in return, love; instead of resisting the demand, give freely of even that which is not demanded. In not responding in kind, one changes the entire structure of the relation: it is now structured by love.¹⁷

If we walk the path humbly, acknowledging the other, who will be our companion along the way? The answer to this question is given by Micah; with your God. There are many uses of phrases like "walk in the way of God," and in Micah 4:5 it is to "walk in the name of God." But here it is "with God." Whether unique or at least rare, the imagery is that of direct and immediate companionship with God, so that one's way of life is with reference to and in the company of God who willingly changes the entire structure of the relation.¹⁸

Thus, the great triad of Micah reflects the path of life—required by God of Israel and of Adam—in terms of *the other* on the path with us who precludes our traveling alone in arrogance or in despair. On the one hand, we notice, as Israel always noticed, that the companion God of covenant is totally incommensurate with us. This God may travel with us, but this God is radically unlike us, and we may not imagine that this traveling companion is only "a good buddy." This traveling companion who willingly walks with us is creator of heaven and earth, but who on the path has no need to call attention to such asymmetry.¹⁹

¹⁷ Brueggemann, "Walk humbly with your God: Micah 6:8," 16.

¹⁸ Brueggemann, "Walk humbly with your God: Micah 6:8," 16.

¹⁹ Brueggemann, "Walk humbly with your God: Micah 6:8," 18.

New Testament

A companion text for examining social activism is that of Luke 10:25-37 or the story of the Good Samaritan. The Old Testament text of Micah compels the Israelites to do justice, love mercy and to walk humbly with God. In this wise, the Israelites would redeem themselves from a life of sin and remain in the grace and mercy of God. An extension of God's directive is that of loving your neighbor. However, before you can love your neighbor biblically, one must understand who your neighbor is. We will now examine who is our neighbor according to the biblical text and how we should treat our neighbors as children of God.

The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us that neighbors are not isolated to one's ethnic and religious group, but extend to anyone we meet in need, and to whom we show mercy and kindness. Joachim Jeremias writes,

In this parable Jesus tells his questioner that while the friend is certainly in the first place, his fellow-countryman, yet the meaning of the term is not limited to that. No human being was beyond the range of his charity. The law of love called him to be ready at any time to give his life for another's need.²⁰

The Moral of the Story

Although the parable of the Good Samaritan is clear and well-known, the biblical implications and moral may not be as clear. C. H. Dodd has captured the definition of a parable that has become the benchmark of all definitions.

²⁰ Colin M. Ambrose, "Desiring to be justified: an examination of the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37," *Sewanee Theological Review* 54, no. 1 (2010): 17, accessed July 14, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

At its simplest the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.²¹

Although there are a wide variety of stories that can be called parables, the true nature of parables is that they point to something else, the kingdom or reign of God. For our purposes, the parable of the Good Samaritan leaves to question the intent of the writer. While the parable ends with the Samaritan helping a Jew, it could have happened the other way around. It could have been about a Jew assisting a Samaritan. In trying to understand the moral of the parable, it is important therefore to understand what the writer was alluding to.

The word good in the Good Samaritan predisposes the reader to a moralistic reading of the text, just as the word Samaritan may cause the reader to miss the point that Jesus was making in the text. In keeping with Dodd's definition of a parable, since parables point to something different, the Good Samaritan is not about the Samaritan as much as it is about the Jew in the ditch. Some scholars argue that a more suitable title for the parable should be, "The Man Who Fell Among Thieves."²² Robert Farrar Capon puts it well:

The defining character—the one to whom the other three respond by being non-neighbor or neighbor—is the man who fell among thieves. The actual Christ-figure in the story, therefore, is yet another loser, yet another down-and-outer who, by just lying there in his lostness and proximity to death . . . is in fact the closest thing to Jesus in the parable.²³

²¹ Mike Graves, "Luke 10:25-37: The Moral of the 'Good Samaritan' Story?," *Review & Expositor* 94, no. 2 (1997): 270, accessed July 15, 2017, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²² Graves, "The Moral of the 'Good Samaritan' Story," 271.

²³ Graves, "The Moral of the 'Good Samaritan' Story," 271.

Capon argues that the traditional understanding of the Good Samaritan makes the Gospel into law rather than the Good News. “The Gospel says clearly that we can be saved only by bad examples: by the stupid example of a Samaritan who spends his livelihood on a loser, and by the horrible example of a Savior who, in an excruciating death, lays down his life for his friends.” This would not be the first time that the church has traded gospel for law.²⁴

The suggested alternative to the traditional Good Samaritan story is that of a Christological understanding of the plight of Jesus and is steeped in grace. Just prior to the parable, the messianic identity of Jesus has just been identified and immediately, the Samaritans reject him. However, this rejection is not based on the Samaritan-Jewish squabble, rather it is based on the Samaritans lack of understanding of the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus must make in Jerusalem. Notice the Christological similarities of the parable and the plight of Jesus. The man who fell among thieves was stripped, beaten, and abandoned. Likewise Jesus was crucified among thieves, beaten and abandoned. Those who passed by are similar to the rejection of Jesus by Judaism’s religious leaders. The one who helps is consistent of the Gentiles getting in while the Jews are outsiders. Ultimately, the man is brought to an inn and cared for. The inn goes back to the birth of Jesus when “there was no room in the inn,” yet the compassion from a stranger allowed Mary and Joseph to deliver the child in a stable.²⁵

Therefore, it is critically important for readers of the text to understanding the meaning of parables and their intended purpose in salvation history. If a parable is read as a story, the meaning may be distorted, which is the case most of the time? Parables are

²⁴ Graves, "The Moral of the 'Good Samaritan' Story," 272.

²⁵ Graves, "The Moral of the 'Good Samaritan' Story," 272.

written with a bent toward the kingdom of God. The underlying meaning of the parable at its simplest is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.

A Story of Love

While the story of the Good Samaritan is dynamic, it raises the question of who is my neighbor based on a simple, uncluttered, undifferentiated, un-philosophical, un-psychological act of love. What are the characteristics of this act? How can it be described?

Love is activity. While we may know all the details of the story and are able to have in depth discussion regarding it, we actually will know nothing about the conditions of the man by the side of the road unless activity occurs. Unless we get off our philosophical donkeys and share in someone's trouble or help to heal someone's sorrow, we are like top heavy, honest Charlie Brown who says, "We don't win any ball-games, but we have some interesting discussions." Love is not a sensation, a chance mood, a sacred infusion; it is action on behalf of someone else.²⁶

Love is a total orientation of character. We know this because of where the act of loving-kindness took place and who was helped; in a hostile land where Jews and Samaritans were rivals and the person needing assistance was a Jew. We act in love in difficult situations only when life as a whole is bent that way. Priest and Levites may have been religiously oriented, but it is clear that their lives were not oriented by love, for

²⁶ Walter Klaassen, "A case study in true love: Luke 10:25-37," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 9, no. 3 (September 1991): 331, accessed July 14, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

this situation was too difficult; it called for a decision that was out of line with the direction of life in which they were going.²⁷

We sometimes talk about the sacrifices of love. When we look at the actions of the Samaritan in this story, we can see sacrificial love at its best. The Samaritan was "moved with pity." There was no careful consideration of the pros and cons of the action, and then at last a resigned conclusion. There is no hesitation; the action is a spontaneous outflowing of love and concern for the needy one. There is no thought of giving up anything. It simply goes out and gives freely what is needed without thought of reward, without thought of inconvenience to self, without exploring whether love will be reciprocated or not.²⁸

Other indications of love in this story are 1) The Samaritan saw someone in need and moved to alleviate the condition; 2) Love sets no limits, it is an act of faith. It acts regardless of the consequences; 3) The Samaritan did not use the needy man as a means to an end, the man's condition was an end in itself; and 4) The Samaritan acted because he was a free man. He had received religious and personal independence. Regardless of the rules, laws, and racial stipulations, he was free to do as his heart leads him.²⁹

What is most interesting in this parable is that God is never mentioned. Therefore, one cannot say that the Samaritan acted out of love for God. Love carries its own validation, and since God is love and God's love is the ultimate sacrifice known to humanity, it stands to reason that the Samaritan's acts of love can be viewed as doing

²⁷ Klaassen, "A case study in true love," 333.

²⁸ Klaassen, "A case study in true love," 333.

²⁹ Klaassen, "A case study in true love," 334.

God's will. The love of God is also the love of God's humanity, and the love of humanity is the love of God.

Who Is Your Neighbor

Before an understanding of who is your neighbor can be understood, one must understand neighbor in the context of the Jewish tradition. There is great disparity between the Jewish tradition and Jesus when it comes to defining neighbor.

In the Jewish tradition, a neighbor is someone of the same blood relation and religion. Take for instance, in Jewish tradition a Jew would not be put to death for killing a Gentile because the Gentile would not be considered his neighbor. If a Jew saw a Gentile struggling at the point of death, the Jew was under no obligation to help or save him. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Samaritans were outsiders, and therefore Jews were not obliged to show neighborliness towards them. The greater question according to the text is not who is my neighbor but to whom am I a neighbor. This was the question posed to the lawyer. Since one's neighbor is defined by need, whoever has a need that is within my power to touch is my neighbor. So the answer to the lawyer's question is that there are no boundaries attached to love. When we have God's compassionate love within, it will tell us who our neighbor is: Anyone who is in need. In this wise, since the Jew had need and the Samaritan was able to provide assistance, according to kingdom thinking, the Samaritan and the Jew would be neighbors based on the assistance given.³⁰

³⁰ Sue Richard, "To whom am I a neighbor: Luke 10:25-37; 1 John 3:11-18," *Brethren Life And Thought* 32, no. 3 (1987): 180-184, accessed July 15, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

This parable also shows that Shalom is also not for specific people, it is for everyone. Therefore, laity is called upon by God to show peace, harmony, and wholeness. Each person who is a follower of Christ must be prepared to have their schedules interrupted by God in an attempt to show love, Shalom, and neighborliness. When we are unable to show this type of Shalom for fellow human beings, we must examine our relationship with God for everyone created by God is our neighbor and therefore stand in need of our assistance and support.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

The fair and proper administration of laws conforming to the natural law that all persons, irrespective of ethnic origin, gender, possessions, race, religion, etc., are to be treated equally and without prejudice is our working definition of social justice.¹

Religion and the church has always advocated for the fair play, justice, and equality among all people of sacred worth. In addition to these traditional tenants of the faith are ethical injunctions—not to murder or steal, etc. The difficulty with religious social justice is bound in an understanding of who is just and who is not; this typically occurs with the doctrines and disciplines of which most agree that issues of just and unjust ultimately is for God to determine. However, from these various traditions, justice has typically been understood within the context of the family, clan, tribe, or city. With the rise of the nation and state, the context of the problem shifted, but many core principles remain valid. As states and societies become more integrated through globalization, questions of justice take on a more transnational dimension. Issues of genocide, ethnic cleansing, corruption, and the oppression of women and minorities challenge religious communities to rework—and reapply—established ethical principles in a new global context. They also provide an opportunity for collaboration with secular

¹ Business Dictionary, “Social Justice,” accessed June 30, 2017, <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/social-justice.html>.

states, international organizations, and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) committed to similar conceptions of justice and the obligations it entails.²

Similar to social justice is social activism which can be defined as the doctrine or practice of vigorous action or involvement as a means of achieving political or other goals, sometimes by demonstrations, protests, etc. While the church endeavors to be engaged in actions that bring about peace and equality, when they mobilize as a group, they can often be viewed as participating in activism.

The goal of this historical foundation is to look at the how social justice has emerged over the years and how the church's involvement in justice issues have either benefited the church or not.

In philosophical terms, the concept of social justice has a long and distinguished history. From the writings of enlightenment philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries, such as Locke, Rousseau, and Kant, the concept of a "Social Contract" enshrining the rights of citizens within a wider social framework emerged. In this model, the granting of individuals' rights was balanced by the ceding of wider, overarching rights to the state as a whole. In the 19th century, writers such as Proudhon developed the idea of a social contract to reflect the changing nature of the state from a paternalistic entity with a single monarch or aristocratic ruling elite to a more modern, egalitarian model. In Proudhon's writings, the contract existed between citizens rather than between citizen and state. The 20th century American philosopher, John Rawls, went further, proposing that social

² Religious Traditions: Justice and Injustice, accessed June 30, 2017, <https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/essays/religious-traditions-justice-and-injustice>.

justice cannot be achieved if justice and liberty for one person is allowed to be overridden by the greater good of others.³

Key Social Justice Movements in America

After World War II, America seemed to have gone through a metamorphosis and significant change without the permission of the masses. The country was in a very good place economically, demographically, and financially, however, the success of American culture was wrought with systematic conformity. Everyone wanted to be like everyone else or like the Jones'. People wanted to drive the same cars, live in similar houses, in similar suburban communities, and attend similar churches, schools, and workplaces. While much of the conformity was contributed to cultural mores, an even more significant contributor to this conformity has much to do with the end of the war.⁴

While there was much joy and comfort in this newfound conformity by adults, their children grew weary of it and chose to speak out and rebel. As a result a counterculture movement was birthed. The movement was simply a lashing out at the conformity of their culture, and it spawned the Hippie movement. Other important social movements were going on in America, such as the civil rights movement, the gay pride movement, the Latino Movement, the Handicapped Movement, the women's movement, and the Counter-Lash conservative movement. Overall, a lot of different social movements were going on.⁵

³ Social Justice News, "A History of Social Justice," accessed June 30, 2017, <http://www.socialjusticenews.net/en/social-justice>.

⁴ American Social Movements, accessed July 7, 2017, <https://sites.google.com/site/worldstudiessummerrecovery/american-social-movements>.

⁵ American Social Movements.

After the African American Civil Rights movement worked out well for them, all the other people who were under-represented figured that if the African Americans can do it, so can we. There were many different social movements going on in America at that time, however the questions being asked by those in the majority culture were, What exactly were they, who lead them or played a part in them, where did they take place, when did they happen, why did they happen, and so what? What's so important about it?⁶

Counterculture Movement

The very first social justice movement in America began in the 1950 and was known as the counterculture movement. World War II was over, our country's economy and our population were booming. People were living a very impressive lifestyle to say the least. Conformity was the buzzword that was heard around the country by almost every adult, however, his or her children did not have the same level of admiration for this newfound success that America was enjoying.⁷

Suffice to say, the children did not like the idea of mass conformity too much and so they started pushing back. It started small, listening to Rock and Roll, and eventually branched into something much larger. The entire hippie movement was born, and it affected most of America, with hippies from almost every town. The "Hippie Headquarters" was on Haight-Ashbury Street in Los Angeles. There was no solid "leader" so to speak, and so the movement was rather unorganized. The whole movement started in the 60's, and went until the late 70's. The whole counterculture movement was

⁶ American Social Movements.

⁷ American Social Movements.

important because it really set the stage for social movements. All the ones that came after were, in part, spawned by counterculture.⁸

The Civil Rights Movement

Nearly 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans in Southern states still inhabited a starkly unequal world of disenfranchisement, segregation, and various forms of oppression, including race-inspired violence. “Jim Crow” laws at the local and state levels barred them from classrooms and bathrooms, from theaters and train cars, from juries and legislatures. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the separate but equal doctrine that formed the basis for state-sanctioned discrimination, drawing national and international attention to African Americans’ plight. In the turbulent decade and a half that followed, civil rights activists used nonviolent protest and civil disobedience to bring about change, and the federal government made legislative headway with initiatives such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Many leaders from within the African American community and beyond rose to prominence during the Civil Rights era, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Andrew Goodman, and others. They risked—and sometimes lost—their lives in the name of freedom and equality.⁹

From the first movement by African Americans to have civil rights in the 1850’s, The Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Birmingham and the March on Washington, Freedom Summer, Selma to Montgomery

⁸ American Social Movements.

⁹ History.com “The Civil Rights Movement,” accessed July 15, 2017, <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement>.

March, the rise of Black nationalism, and the post 1960 Civil Rights Movement were all actions taken by African Americans in collaboration with other ethnic groups to bring about equality and fair play for African Americans in America.¹⁰

Women's Rights Movement

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” That was Margaret Mead’s conclusion after a lifetime of observing very diverse cultures around the world. Her insight has been borne out time and again throughout the development of this country of ours. Being allowed to live life in an atmosphere of religious freedom, having a voice in the government you support with your taxes, living free of lifelong enslavement by another person. Many once considered these beliefs about how life should and must be lived outlandish. But visionaries whose steadfast work brought about changed minds and attitudes fervently held these beliefs. Now these beliefs are commonly shared across U.S. society.¹¹

1988 marked the 150th Anniversary of the movement where women were given full citizenship in America. While this may seem unheard of on today, much pain, suffering and planning was necessary to persevere until full citizenship was granted. The staggering changes for women that have come about over those seven generations in family life, in religion, in government, in employment, in education—these changes did not just happen spontaneously. Women themselves made these changes happen, very

¹⁰ History.com “The Civil Rights Movement.”

¹¹ National Women’s History Project, “History of Women’s Rights Movement,” accessed July 15, 2017, <http://www.nwhp.org/resources/womens-rights-movement/history-of-the-womens-rights-movement/>.

deliberately. Women have not been the passive recipients of miraculous changes in laws and human nature. As of the referencing this article, seven generations of women have come together to affect these changes in the most democratic ways: through meetings, petition drives, lobbying, public speaking, and nonviolent resistance. They have worked very deliberately to create a better world, and they have succeeded hugely.¹²

Throughout 1998, the 150th anniversary of the Women's Rights Movement was celebrated across the nation with programs and events taking every form imaginable. Like many amazing stories, the history of the Women's Rights Movement began with a small group of people questioning why human lives were being unfairly constricted. For the sake of brevity, other major landmarks toward women's rights include but are not limited to:

- The 1848 Tea to launch revolution
- A convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman held in 1948
- The Declaration of Sentiment identifying where women were treated unjustly
- The first Women's Rights Convention
- The Women's Suffrage Movement of 1950 which formed a women's alliance
- The backlash from various patriarchal sources against women's rights
- The expansion of the movement to include male sympathizers in 1920
- The Woman's Rights Movement officially launched in 1920
- The second wave of the Women's Rights Movement began in 1960-1

¹² National Women's History Project, "History of Women's Rights Movement."

- The reintroduction of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972
- In 1998 the launch of the Living Legacy memorializing women's efforts¹³

Overall, women have accomplished so much, yet a lot still remains to be done.

Substantial barriers to the full equality of America's women still remain before our freedom as a Nation can be called complete. But the Women's Rights Movement has clearly been successful in irrevocably changing the circumstances and hopes of women. The remaining injustices are being tackled daily in the courts and conference rooms, homes, and organizations, workplaces and playing fields of America.

Gay Civil Rights

Inspired by the African American Civil Rights Movement, homosexuals in America began to organize themselves and to fight for the equality and the justice they did not have yet. With the rise of gay rights activists, gay-rights opponents appeared, and the issue about homosexuals' rights turned into a controversial, legal battle, which today is still fought with neither party entirely winning. By taking a close look at the history of gay rights, common prejudices against homosexuals, and the common arguments used on both sides of this topic without the emotional heat and biases, which is often linked with this controversial topic, one is able to think critically and approach the issue of homosexuality in a more reasonable way.¹⁴

The universal definition of Homosexuals is defined as people who are sexually attracted by other persons of the same sex. The words gays or gay people are also

¹³ National Women's History Project, "History of Women's Rights Movement."

¹⁴ Civil Rights, "The History of Gay Rights, accessed July 15, 2017, <http://enderminh.com/minh/civilrights.aspx#.WXJQGdPyvEo>.

common terms used instead of homosexuals, whereas lesbians are only used to describe female homosexuals. These fundamental definitions of homosexuals already indicate that this minority group is evenly distributed throughout the entire society. Homosexuals can be both men and women. They exist in all classes, social groups, races, positions, and countries, regardless of their age or origin. As far as historians can trace, homosexuals have always been in existence, including Julius Caesar, Plato, and Alexander the Great.¹⁵

The Gay Rights Movement is rooted in the so-called Stonewall riots, marking the first major attempt of gays to organize themselves and to resist discrimination. In the summer of 1969 policemen in New York started to raid unlicensed bars, resulting in closings of five gay bars with minor street disturbances. During the following forty-five minutes, the nine policemen were involved in a violent struggle, in which policemen beat protesters, and in which the crowd tried to set the bar with the policemen inside on fire. As police reinforcement arrived, the crowd which had already rose to about 400 angry protesters, finally spread out, but re-gathered for two additional nights around the then-closed Stonewall Inn to protest against the police's discrimination of gay bars, shouting slogans like "Gay Power", "Legalize gay bars," and "Gay is good."¹⁶

In this the new millennium, citizens of the United States are once more deeply divided. Important decisions on homosexuality are to be made, and countries like Denmark and Norway serve as models, as the governments have legalized gay marriages already in 1989 and 1993. It is, therefore, important for the people to be involved in this issue and to clearly take side, rather than just avoiding the problem. If one tries to avoid the problem of integration of homosexuals just out of convenience, one is as irresponsible

¹⁵ Civil Rights, "The History of Gay Rights."

¹⁶ Civil Rights, "The History of Gay Rights."

as those who did not take side when the nation was deeply divided when it came to the question about slavery, women's right to vote, and African Americans' equal protection rights. The history of tolerance is going to reach another landmark, and no one should miss the opportunity to raise his or her voice. Today, significant Supreme Court decisions have legalized gay marriage in America.¹⁷

Hispanic and Chicano Movement

For the sake of this document, Hispanic and Chicano are interchangeable although they have different origins.

The 1960s was a turbulent decade in American history, fraught with conflicts over issues from Civil Rights to the war in Vietnam. The Mexican American Civil Rights Movement, one of the least studied social movements of the 1960s, encompassed a broad cross section of issues—from restoration of land grants, to farm workers rights, to enhanced education, to voting and political rights.¹⁸

In their fight for social justice, a four-part plan was implemented and executed successfully. The plan consisted of the following:

1. Quest for a Homeland, examines the beginnings of the movement by profiling Reies Lopez Tijerina and the land grant movement in New Mexico in 1966 and 1967.
2. The Struggle in the Fields, examines the importance of César Chávez and his efforts to organize farm workers in the central valley of California. It delineates the various components of Chávez's strategy for farm worker self determination—strikes, boycotts, pilgrimages, fasts—and emphasizes his

¹⁷ Civil Rights, “The History of Gay Rights.”

¹⁸ The Journal for Multimedia History, “Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement,” accessed July 19, 2017, <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~salvador/Spring/Spring%20Documents/Civil%20Rights/Chicano!%20A%20History%20of%20the%20Mexican%20American%20CR.pdf>.

commitment to nonviolence and the importance of faith and prayer in achieving his goal.

3. Taking Back the Schools, is the best of the four parts. It covers the Los Angeles high school blowouts of 1968 thoroughly and with passion.
4. Fighting for Political Power, discusses the creation of La Raza Unida Party as a third party force for political power and the importance of political rights. It culminates in the 1972 election and the Raza Unida convention, and the fragmentation of the party at the height of its membership and recognition.¹⁹

Many of the issues of Hispanic American rights are as familiar to us today as they were in the 1960s. The fight continues in many urban cities throughout America.

The Handicapped (Differently Abled) Movement

The United States also has a long history of discrimination against persons with disabilities. In colonial days, when the focus was on survival and building new communities in the wilderness, physical stamina and moral worthiness were considered essential. Dependency of any kind was considered a financial burden. As early as 1751, states began opening almshouses, workhouses, insane asylums, and other institutions for the support and maintenance of idiots, lunatics, and other persons of unsound minds.²⁰

From 1968 to 1992, a number of laws were created that established certain civil rights for persons with disabilities. These laws addressed architectural barriers, discrimination against persons with disabilities in federally funded programs, education rights for children with disabilities, Bill of Rights for persons with developmental disabilities and mental illness, discrimination in housing, consumer control over their own vocational rehabilitation plans, and creation of Centers for Independent Living. Most

¹⁹ The Journal for Multimedia History, "Chicano."

²⁰ Disability Rights Movement, "History of the Independent Living Movement," accessed July 17, 2017, <http://www.lifecil.org/about/disability-rights-movement/>.

important among these is the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the civil rights law for all persons with disabilities.²¹

However, the passing of any civil rights bill does not automatically ensure rights, civil rights are only granted through a struggle. In fact, the disability rights movement in many ways mirrors the civil rights movement of African Americans in the 1950's. In the 1950s, Blacks protested because they had to sit in the back of the bus; in the 1970s, people with disabilities protested because they couldn't get on the bus! We, too, are fighting blatant and subtle prejudice, building pride in who we are, and protesting discrimination in non-violent ways.²²

People with disabilities have been a hidden, misunderstood minority, often routinely deprived of the basic life choices that even the most disadvantaged among us take for granted. In the last twenty to thirty years, little noticed alongside the civil rights struggles of African-Americans, women, gays and lesbians, and other minorities, another movement has slowly taken shape to demand for people with disabilities the fundamental rights that have already been granted to all other Americans. It has led to the emergence of a group consciousness, even the start of a disability culture, which did not exist nationally even in the late 1970s.

Social justice in a nutshell is has given many people who have been marginalized over the years a seat at the table of decision-making and afforded them a voice and the power to act powerfully to ensure fair and equitable treatment. As noted in each of the movements listed above, social justice that leads to action, laws, and sanctions does not

²¹ Disability Rights Movement.

²² Disability Rights Movement.

and will not occur without consistent pressure being placed on the majority culture to act responsibly in the face of blatant wrongdoing. It is true, as a nation, in our humble beginnings; we enacted laws without the wisdom of today's thinking. Through classical conditioning on the one hand and the abuse of power on the other, marginalized groups continue to organize, plan, and take action toward making their wishes known to exist in this country with all the rights and privileges of majority groups. The struggle for social justice continues.

Social Justice and Common Good

From water to land, from the sea to the coast, from knowledge to work, from energy to territory, from joy to peace—these are the themes of an agenda that helps us to build an economy based on common goods. This economy is not founded on commoditization, privatization, and war, but on people's rights, on equality and solidarity—an economy that is thus an alternative to the current model of—usually unsustainable —growth. Throughout history, the world has had a major problem recognizing that all humans are created equal in the sight and image of God, called to live in humanity and given the responsibility to tend or care for all of God's creation. Sharing common goods, ownership, participation, and right relationships are important for social justice. Yet the rivalry for goods in the market has dominion over equitable sharing of all goods and resources. The world is trapped in a death dealing system, which defies God's gift of life and creation.²³

²³ Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, 2011, "Social justice and common goods," *The Ecumenical Review* 63, no. 3: 330-343, accessed July 17, 2017, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

We are faced with power imbalances at the geopolitical level and the global domination of liberal market. Common goods are under a growing threat of commodification resulting in climate change, poverty, and inequality. The power of transnational corporations is setting the geopolitical and geo-economic scene. Their power gives them a stronghold on the rules of trade and finance and exacerbates existing inequalities between rich and poor. States are losing their capacity to fulfill their main functions of regulating economy, protecting the environment, defending social cohesion and values and guaranteeing their peoples' security. At the global level, enforcement of economic, social, and cultural rights has been minimal because forces that do not want rules on the one hand, and are constantly enhancing anonymity to escape responsibility and accountability on the other confront governments.²⁴

The Incarnation of God in order to save humanity from sin and hardship reminds all Christians of their duty to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ and to work hard for peace and justice for all God's creation. The Commission of the Churches on International Relations (CCIA) also has a role in reflecting on the current reality of economic, political, environmental, and ethical crises and in examining the implications for common goods and social justice.

Some key elements that characterize social justice are:

- Situation where all people can develop their potential to live an abundant life (a society in which everyone has the freedom to pursue their goals in life and can be the best she/he can be)
- Acknowledging rights of all people to and providing access to all goods essential for life in peace and dignity

²⁴ Commission of the Churches on International, Affairs, 331.

- Participation of people in decision making, with the power to speak on their own behalf, where voices of the voiceless are heard by those in power
- Living in a community where one can be loved, can receive and share material as well spiritual goods
- Respect and dignity for all human beings and nature²⁵

Common goods in economic theory are described as goods which are non-excludable but are a subject of rivalry (i.e. when they are offered nobody can be excluded from accessing them), however, people compete for them because there is not enough of this good to satisfy everybody's needs (so-called tragedy of commons). The above criteria are not fully respected and common goods are identified, as all that is essential for a life in likeness and dignity for all of God's creation. Examples of common goods include: land, water, air, health, education, shelter, energy, transport, peace, human security, information, knowledge, solidarity, and freedom.²⁶

Churches today seek a new worldview vis-à-vis the systemic injustices of the world economic order, which has disregarded the order of God's creation and our responsibility as part of this creation. In a world of great disparities between rich and poor, where pursuit of wealth is the order of the day, churches need to reflect critically on what is necessary for life and what are our shared responsibilities to honor the order of God's life-giving economy.

In 1968, churches which gathered for the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Uppsala, Sweden, stated: "Our hope is in him who makes all things new. He judges our structures of thought and action and renders them obsolete. If our false security in the old and our fear of revolutionary change tempt us to defend the status quo

²⁵ Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, 332.

²⁶ Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, 332.

or to patch it up with half-hearted measures, we may all perish. The death of the old may cause pain to some, but failure to bring up a new world community may bring death to all. In their faith in the coming Kingdom of God and in their search for his righteousness, Christians are urged to participate in the struggle of millions of people for greater social justice and for world development.²⁷

A Conceptual History of Social Justice

The theory of distributive justice—how a society or group should allocate its scarce resources or product among individuals with competing needs or claims—goes back at least two millennia. Aristotle and Plato wrote on the question, and the Talmud recommends solutions to the distribution of an estate among the deceased's creditors.²⁸

The above quote speaks about the widespread perception of distributive justice and its philosophical impact about how justice is understood and practiced in major institutions. According to this analysis, political philosophers from Plato to Rawls have been engaged in a great debate that has raged down the centuries, arguing about the seemingly perennial question: what makes a society just? In this vein, Brian Barry opened his *Treatise on Social Justice* with the announcement that he was addressing 'the question that Plato asked in the *Republic* two and a half thousand years ago: What is justice?' Like Plato, argued Barry, he would be considering the central issue in any theory of justice, namely the defensibility of unequal relations between people.²⁹

²⁷ Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, 333.

²⁸ Ben Jackson, "The Conceptual History of Social Justice," accessed July 6, 2017, https://www.academia.edu/1588419/The_Conceptual_History_of_Social_Justice, 356.

²⁹ Jackson, "The Conceptual History of Social Justice," 356.

Similar views can be found among other political theorists. Iris Marion Young has suggested that contemporary theories of justice should employ the Platonic view of justice as the virtue of society as a whole, while John Rawls himself also linked his work to classical political theory, stressing, for example, that Aristotle had a conception of social justice. Such claims contain important truths, but they also gloss over the complexity of the conceptual history of justice. They can suggest a timeless contest over the meaning of distributive justice that is insensitive to the particular historical circumstances faced by different political theorists, and that obscures the evolution of the concept in the course of more than two millennia of argument about its meaning.³⁰

David Miller has recently made explicit some of these complexities in his “Principles of Social Justice,” where he prefaces his substantive theoretical contribution with some reflections on the origins and scope of the concept of social justice. Although he concedes that older traditions of thinking about justice have influenced more recent ideas, Miller sees theorizing about social justice as a distinctively modern enterprise. The phrase social justice itself, Miller notes, was only introduced into political discourse from the late nineteenth century onwards, typically in the works of progressive social philosophers or political economists, and its arrival on the political scene reflected growing public controversy about economic and political institutions and the role of the state. Miller only sketches how this new idea differed from earlier theories of justice, but he does highlight ‘three assumptions’ that must be made before principles of social justice can be elaborated. First, there must be a bounded society with a determinate membership, so that an individual’s fair share can be defined in relation to the shares held

³⁰ Jackson, “The Conceptual History of Social Justice,” 356-7.

by other members of the community, and each individual within a particular ‘universe of distribution’ sees themselves as part of the same social group. In both theory and practice, it has usually been assumed that the most appropriate ‘universe’ for social justice is the nation state, a point that Miller has explicitly defended in other writings.³¹

Second, it must be assumed that there is an identifiable institutional structure to which principles of justice can apply and which can be modified in line with these ideals. Elsewhere, Miller has indicated that he has in mind here such intellectual developments as the rise of social science, which enabled the impact of institutional changes on individuals’ life chances to be traced with a new-found precision and rigor. Third, it must further be assumed that there is some agency, classically the state that is capable of initiating and directing the institutional changes necessary to create social justice.

By implication, we might conclude that Miller believes these three conditions to have been satisfied for the first time in the late nineteenth century. Miller’s account is suggestive and raises interesting questions for historians of political thought and political philosophers alike. One group of questions is both theoretical and historical: what exactly makes social justice so different from earlier ideas about justice? How should the concept be defined so as to be both theoretically robust and useful for the analysis of very different historical periods? A second group of questions relates to the intellectual history of his discussion: is it indeed the case that social justice first emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century? Who were the earliest exponents of the idea and what were they trying to achieve? What were the specific political and economic issues that motivated and framed their theorizing? Recent research provides important insights into this subject

³¹ Jackson, “The Conceptual History of Social Justice,” 357.

and gives useful orientation for anyone who wants to grapple with the questions raised by Miller.³²

Comfortable Church Culture

Activist coalition groups seek to unite their members in commitment to two cultural narratives: that organized faith communities can effectuate social change, and that activism is an essential part of religious commitment. Organizational dynamics, however, sometimes inhibit the development of shared cultural commitments within diverse coalitions and congregations. Regional activist coalitions usually include congregations of diverse racial, cultural, and socioeconomic. This means that member congregations often have different short-term priorities, and that factions within member congregations may disagree over the best uses of church resources. Moreover, regional coalitions often mobilize around issues in which some sections of their membership have much greater direct stake than others. Immigrants' rights campaigns, for instance, bear directly on the economic and political circumstances of majority Latino congregations, while Black churches often have more direct stake in criminal justice reform. Hart argues that such segmentation of interests and priorities among progressive activist coalitions often keeps such groups' public discourse constrained to single issues and limited constituencies, rather than expansive, covering multiple issues, and persisting over time.³³

Activist leaders seek to use cultural narratives to bring together constituencies with concerns about particular issue areas, such as immigration policy, criminal justice

³² Jackson, "The Conceptual History of Social Justice," 357.

³³ John D. Delehanty, "Prophets of Resistance: Social Justice Activists Contesting Comfortable Church Culture," *Sociology Of Religion* 77, no. 1 (2016): 40, accessed July 17, 2017, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

reform, housing, or labor policy, into stable, culturally unified, multi-issue movements that attract diverse member congregations and articulate expansive social justice discourses. To accomplish this, they strive to construct community organizing as a long-term religious project aimed not only at changing the policies enacted by state actors, but also at altering how the concept of power is understood and deployed in the broader civil society and culture.³⁴

In part through the use of such practices, activist groups have achieved much success in the last twenty years. Their work has been crucial to legislative changes on issues including affordable housing, voters' rights, and criminal justice and the number of regional activist coalitions active in the United States increased from 133 in 1999 to 189 in 2011. Yet despite this success at both political and organizational levels, activist models of religious culture have yet to take root in the vast majority of American congregations. The proportion of American congregations formally affiliated with community organizing networks remains smaller than one in ten, even within affiliated congregations, clergy and leaders often encounter disinclination to participate or even active hostility to organizing activities among sections of the wider congregation membership.³⁵

Scholars explain FBCO's institutional growth and legislative success by emphasizing groups' ability to build cultural commitments through organizational bridging and political reframing, but the implications of social justice activism for

³⁴ Delehanty, "Prophets of Resistance, 40.

³⁵ Delehanty, "Prophets of Resistance, 40.

religious culture itself, as well as how cultural dynamics may limit congregations' and individuals' participation in activism, remain largely unexplored.³⁶

Why Teach Social Justice

The lack of access to education, historically, has created and perpetuated deep injustice. Therefore, a discussion of why educational trends in social justice are important in establishing health social justice systems. Another critical consideration to educating people about social justice is the level in which information is accessible for public knowledge and consumption.

Education plays an important part in the development of oppressive social structures. Before the industrial revolution, only a small percentage of the world's population could read or write. Education was simply not a reality of life for most people who were just trying to survive day by day. Work was their reality, and beyond learning a craft, very few had the time and resources to devote themselves to formal studies. Rulers, nobles, and clerics had greater access to education, but also the ability to limit and control the information that was disseminated to their subjects. No doubt, economic and political agendas were at play.³⁷

Access to education for the working poor, ethnic minorities and slaves was an intentional strategy to keep them subservient and dependent on existing power structures. Often, these strategies of limiting educational opportunities to some were

³⁶ Delehanty, "Prophets of Resistance, 40.

³⁷ Luis G. Pedraja, "Social justice, education, & the future of higher education in America," *Apuntes* 33, no. 2 (2013): 40, accessed July 19, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

justified by those in power by claiming that these groups had inferior capacity and reasoning abilities—claims that still survive in some forms today.

Therefore, educating the working poor, minorities and slaves was a dangerous proposition, especially in areas where cheap labor was a driving factor of the work force. In this case, education was denied under the guise that the identified group did not have the capacity for reasoning, but more importantly, educating them would create a desire to dream and long for a greater quality of life. For this reason, slaves were often denied access to education, under the guise that for example, in the dark days of slavery in this country, teaching a slave to read was against the law. As Frederick Douglass, the famous American social reformer and former slave wrote: education and slavery are incompatible. An educated slave could see beyond the injustice of enslavement.³⁸

Access to education, alone, is not a panacea for social problems. As noted above, education can become a tool for oppression. According to Paulo Freire, a well-known Brazilian educator and philosopher, education is not a neutral process. Education can become an instrument for domination by treating the oppressed as unfortunate and by providing them with models from the dominant culture for them to emulate. By emphasizing the dominant perspectives, history, culture, and socio-economic structure, it robs the oppressed of their own culture, invalidates their critique of the dominant culture, and denies them access to their own intellectual resources.³⁹

The growing demand for a highly skilled and educated workforce is slowly changing the landscape of higher education and creating more socio-economic disparity

³⁸ Pedraja, "Social justice, education, & the future of higher education in America," 42.

³⁹ Pedraja, "Social justice, education, & the future of higher education in America," 45.

between economic classes. In order to address these disparities, new trends in education is required. One of the first ways of addressing these disparities call for education on a level that can be attained for those who have been denied education in the past. Trade and schools that provided needed skills for the working class have been replaced with community college programs and technical institutes—all at the post-secondary education level. The demand for education has created the need for different ways of providing education for those who cannot participate in traditional full-time curriculums. The traditional classroom is being replaced with decentralized campuses and experiential learning centers. Finally, while education is demanded by the masses, the cost of affording education has posed a significant problem for those whose income places them at a distinct disadvantage. As a result, most students are entering college without the necessary skills to succeed in college. At the same time, there are insufficient resources to help unprepared students to develop the basic skills they need.⁴⁰ Making education accessible to all people is a certain path forward toward eradicating social justice disparities among people of all cultures and races.⁴¹

We will now turn our attention away from what social justice is, in many and varied forms and begin to look at some of the more significant social justice movements that emerged out of a need to level the playing field for the poor, marginalized, minority and those who have no access to the table of decision-making.

⁴⁰ Pedraja, "Social justice, education, & the future of higher education in America," 45.

⁴¹ Pedraja, "Social justice, education, & the future of higher education in America," 45.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The theological foundations of justice in general and social justice particularly are a vast topic to cover. All theologies speak in part to issues of justice as a part of being in relationship with God. This document is an attempt to bring to the forefront some of the theological voices that speak from a vantage point of particularity, thereby avoiding giving rank of one voice over the other.

Certainly, as a person of color who has lived all of his life identified as a marginalized person, the issue of justice and social justice is critical to an understanding of the grounding out of which ministry is engaged at the local church level. As a native of Africa, the pain of watching people of color in the United States being denied the privileges and opportunities afforded to the majority culture is daunting. However, watching African Americans not take advantage of the rights and privileges that are afforded them as citizens of this country is overwhelming and breathtaking. This is not to cast blame on my brothers and sisters of America, rather it is to speak to the need of educating people of color the critical and urgent need for social justice education, reform, and action as a way of life in these United States of America. After all, biblically speaking, we know according to scripture in both the Old and New Testament that the Triune God is a God of justice and is always on the side of the least, the last and the lost.

A Biblical Theology of Justice

Because the Word of God is central to vocational ministry, it seems proper to begin the theological foundational exploration with an understanding of how the Bible treats justice.

What is Biblical Justice? Biblical justice involves making individuals, communities, and the cosmos whole, by upholding both goodness and impartiality. It stands at the center of true religion, according to James, who says that the kind of religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world (Jas 1:27). Earlier Scripture says, "The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern" (Prv 29:7).¹

The biblical narrative would have us see that justice flows from the very heart and nature of who God is. God embodies justice in the very fabric of creation because all that God made was good. As far back as the Garden of Eden, God created everything to live and work together in perfect harmony until original sin, which challenged the created order of God and created a flawed world in which we live. From that moment, God has been at work to have humanity embrace him and his holy love in its pure and unconditional form. This is what motivates God throughout the Old and New Testaments in his judgments on sin and injustice. These judgments are both individual and corporate in scope. From this perspective, one of the greatest acts of injustice that we commit on a daily basis is to deny the love of God that is found in Christ Jesus and to deny that we

¹ Christianity Today, "What is Biblical Justice," accessed July 7, 2017, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2010/summer/biblicaljustice.html>.

need Jesus and his righteousness in order to be pleasing to God. We need Jesus to advocate for us against our sense of injustice and unrighteousness.²

The church is to live in the midst of Jesus restoring all things. As we experience the wholeness that Jesus offers, we are to carry his justice forward in the world. We sense God's heart for this in James' epistle. James, like an Old Testament prophet, denounced oppression toward the poor. He saw church leaders favoring the rich and looking down on those less fortunate (Jas 2:1-13). James calls for the breaking down of these divisions, as God seeks to renew his people, making them whole. Today, much of the same conditions exists; the downplay of social justice in favor of personal morality. Often we would rather illuminate what we give and what we do rather than seeking the welfare of those less fortunate than ourselves. The gospel of Matthew reminds us, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill, and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness" (Mt 23:23).³

In order to restore wholeness within the life of the community, transformation must take place individually and communally. Although injustice and morality are birthed in the human heart, justice is at the center of God's heart. Without the love of God and God's justice, we are unable to rid ourselves of sin, we are unable to purify our hearts, and we are unable to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Unlike the earliest followers of Christ, we live in a democratic society where even criminals and evildoers have rights, and we have the ability to influence public policies and legislation. The relationship between morality and legislation is complex—they are

² Christianity Today, "What is Biblical Justice."

³ Christianity Today, "What is Biblical Justice."

distinct but not completely unrelated. We should reflect on how the justice of God's kingdom influences our involvement in matters of government. In the Gospels as well as Acts, we see Christians ministering to the poor and marginalized, even challenging societal structures that weigh down upon them (Mt 9:35-38; Acts 3-4, 5:12-16). Today we have even more opportunities to extend and advance that care in our society. In our post-Christian setting, many skeptics view religion as corrosive, divisive, and a source of injustice. But the kind of religion the Bible advocates is rooted in justice that flows from the heart of God. It seeks to bring all things into the wholeness of God. As those justified by faith in the God of all justice, we are to experience the wholeness that he brings and extend it as citizens of his kingdom.⁴

A Wesleyan/Methodist Understanding of Justice

The question is raised, "How can Christians maintain authentic Christian belief and practices at the same time as they relate constructively to non-Christian persons and communities?" To answer this question and be both biblically and theologically responsible is to understand the importance of identifying shared concerns and seeking the fulfillment of these ideals through a deeper theological grounding than is normally associated with them. In the broader sense, all people have an innate quest for dignity, justice and to be able to flourish in society. It is these three common bond that both Christian and non-Christian have in common, yet are often misunderstood and misappropriated based on one's perspective. A critical extension of Wesley's theological institutions and insights can therefore serve to enrich public discourse and life,

⁴ Christianity Today, "What is Biblical Justice."

particularly regarding the themes of dignity, justice, and flourishing within the human family.⁵

Dignity

In George Kateb's book *Human Dignity*, Kateb offers an intentionally and self-described secular perspective grounding dignity in our existence as human beings. According to Kateb, the identity of a person as a human being and the state of that humanity as the highest form of creation is existential to who they see themselves. While there are those who do not agree with Kateb, nonetheless, he maintains that the concept of human dignity must be defended and utilized in order to account for the equal status of all persons. At creation, humanity was created and placed a little lower than the angels to care for God's created order. In this wise, there was value in the state of humanity over other living creatures in the created order. Likewise, humanity was created male and female with the female becoming the helpmate for the male. Therefore, in a sense, God created humanity as equal beings in God's sight.⁶

In Kateb's book, it is interesting to note that he takes great care in avoiding theological language as much as possible. However, it is obviously clear that Kateb's offering bears similarity to the doctrine of creation. That congruence provides the tools necessary to recast the concept of dignity with greater theological depth and clearer public import. In particular, Judeo-Christian teaching on the imago Dei reveals the basis for such an understanding. As we read in Genesis 1:26-27,

⁵ Kenneth Loyer, "Dignity, Justice, And Flourishing Within The Human Family: Methodist Theology And The Enrichment Of Public Discourse And Life," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 49, no. 2 (2014): 170, accessed July 5, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

⁶ Loyer, "Dignity, Justice, And Flourishing," 171.

Then God said, "Let US make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth:' So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.⁷

According to Wesleyan theology, the fact that God created humanity in His image makes us *capable* of God. What this means is that because of God free and unmerited favor and grace making us in His own image, humanity is capable of knowing, loving and obeying God. Being created in the image of God makes all human beings persons of sacred worth and dignity. Therefore, because of this extraordinary gift from God, humanity is responsible to living up to the call that God as given us as human beings.⁸

In creation God created us as people of sacred worth. Therefore, God has designated all of His human creation as caretakers of His created order. Having this great responsibility and dominion over other creatures, it is our responsibility to be "the more strongly obliged" to bring honor to our Maker. Humanity's calling toward the world is to act—in a necessarily public way—on behalf of God for the good of the created order, to care for one another and the rest of creation as representatives of the God "whose mercy is over all his works" (Ps 145:9), or in other words, to imitate God as the very children of God that the Father's great love, freely lavished on us, has made us to be (1 Jn 3:1). Understood in that sense, dignity assumes a force and magnitude befitting of its reality as both a gift and a responsibility for us all under God.⁹

⁷ Loyer, "Dignity, Justice, And Flourishing," 172.

⁸ Loyer, "Dignity, Justice, And Flourishing," 172.

⁹ Loyer, "Dignity, Justice, And Flourishing," 174.

Justice

According to Wesleyan theology, there is a connection between justice and common good and Christian theology and Methodist Doctrine. Both are concerned with people living a high quality of life; both account for justice in a way that exemplifies a deeper understanding of the theological implication and substance for greater public significance.

The deeper theological substance derives from the foundation of virtue and justice in God. In his sermon “An Israelite Indeed,” Wesley critiques the proposal of Francis Hutcheson in *An Inquiry to the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty* (1725) that the essence of virtue is benevolence or love of our fellow creatures, a claim that is representative of Hutcheson's autonomous ethical theory divorced from any theological ground. Against Hutcheson, Wesley insists on the love of God as “the true foundation both of the love of our neighbor and all other virtues,” in accordance with Christ’s own designation of this commandment as the “first and greatest” (Mt 22:38). He further asserts that truth and love are to be understood as integrally united, and in a direct correlation with holiness:

This then is real, genuine, solid virtue. Not truth alone, nor conformity to truth. This is a property of real virtue, not the essence of it. Not love alone, though this comes nearer the mark: for “love” in one sense “is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom 13:10). No: truth and love united together are the essence of virtue or holiness.¹⁰

The love of Christ decisively shows that God's commitment to justice takes the form of self-giving mercy. If God was willing to do so much for the justice of God and the common good, then with God's help we can—and must— give of ourselves in pursuit of just relationships, a just world, and the good of others.

¹⁰ Loyer, “Dignity, Justice, And Flourishing,” 175.

Flourishing

As with dignity and justice, flourishing itself can be envisaged anew, with all its potential impact for individuals, communities, and society as a whole. If well-being is based on such measurable factors as engagement, relationships, and meaning, then there is definite common ground between this view of well-being and what Christians know to be the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, healing relationships, bringing new life and purpose, giving us strength for the journey, and promoting through holiness of heart and life the knowledge and love of God and love for our neighbor. That work, historically a hallmark of how Methodists have approached the Gospel, provides a formative vantage point from which to consider flourishing. As Wesley explains,

I believe the infinite and eternal Spirit of God, equal with the Father and the Son, to be not only perfectly holy in himself, but the immediate cause of all holiness in us: enlightening our understandings, rectifying our wills and affections, renewing our natures, uniting our persons to Christ, assuring us of the adoption of sons, leading us in our actions, purifying and sanctifying our souls and bodies to a foil and eternal enjoyment of God.¹¹

For Christians from all ecclesial traditions and all walks of life, dignity equates to a gift, justice to an imperative, and flourishing to an invitation, with each freely extended to all people, whether Christian or not. Given the holistic scope of the approach to the Gospel taken by the Wesley brothers and early Methodists, Christians from Wesleyan and Methodist churches should highlight these interests and pursue them with particular vigor and zeal.

A vibrant, flourishing life occurs when we live in justly ordered relationships with God and with others by recognizing and celebrating our own God-given dignity and that of others. Dignity, justice, and flourishing reveal the essence of human worth and

¹¹ Loyer, "Dignity, Justice, And Flourishing," 179.

potential over against the dominant cultural measures of value and meaning such as self-gratification, status, wealth, influence, and possessions. Toward that end, faith-filled Christians, including Christians from the Methodist and Wesleyan family, can make profound, indispensable contributions to democratic, pluralistic societies.¹²

A Calvinist Theology of Justice

John Calvin's publication of nine editions of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* from 1536 until he was satisfied with it in 1559 form the basis of Calvinist theology. In Calvin's publications, he contrasted his own reflections with those of some Anabaptist writers and, in the later editions, especially with the ideas of Peter Rideman, a Hutterite who published his *Account of Our Religion, Doctrine and Faith* in 1545.¹³

Rideman's understanding of Christian faithfulness, which in some respects seems a precursor of what Stanley Hauerwas and others say today, stressed the church as a holy community of disciples who obey Christ's reign, hold all possessions in common, and participate in civil society only in a restricted way. According to Rideman, civil government is a result of the wrath of God to allow the godless to punish and oppress the wicked by means of the sword. By contrast, those who obey Christ put off all worldly glory. No Christian is a ruler and no ruler is a Christian, for the child of blessing cannot be the servant of wrath. Therefore, according to Rideman, a Christian neither wages war

¹² Loyer, "Dignity, Justice, And Flourishing," 182.

¹³ Douglas F. Ottati, "What Reformed theology in a Calvinist key brings to conversations about justice," *Political Theology* 10, no. 3 (July 2009): 447-469, accessed July 8, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

nor wields the worldly sword to practice vengeance. Christian citizens pay general taxes, but refuse to pay special taxes levied for the purpose of going to war. Neither can they make weapons, sit as judges, or participate in civil courts. In sum, for the occasionally imprisoned Protestant radical, civil government has its place outside Christ, but not in Christ.¹⁴

Calvin differs from Rideman in that Calvin claims that civil government and the spirit are not antithetical but offer a theology that backs robust participation in the public realm. The humanist student of law disagrees and believes that once we are in Christ and are transported to God's Kingdom we are unworthy to be occupied with vile and worldly things. Calvin claimed that God had established civil government to provide for the public manifestation of religion so that humanity may be maintained among men. He concludes that the world's only function is to provide bread, water, sun, and air, and human's place and honor is far more excellent. When Calvin discussed magistrates, or the protectors and guardians of the laws, he claimed, "God has entrusted to them the business of serving him through their office," and that "civil authority is a calling, not only lawful before God, but also the most sacred and by far the most honorable of all callings, in the whole life of mortal men."¹⁵

Calvin espouses that the true God is the God of righteousness and justice. Consider Deuteronomy 10:17-18, "The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them with

¹⁴ Ottati, "What Reformed theology in a Calvinist key brings," 449.

¹⁵ Ottati, "What Reformed theology in a Calvinist key brings," 452.

food and clothing." This is the God "who executes justice for the oppressed" (Ps 146:7) and is especially concerned for the plight of all those unable to ensure their own fair treatment (Ex 22:21-27). The same affirmation emerges with force in the prophets where we find in Amos that God judges all nations, complains that the scales are fixed, the poor oppressed, and the needy crushed, even as those in authority do indeed take bribes. Here, too, God excoriates worship apart from justice.¹⁶

I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies...
But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing
stream (Am 5:21-24).

Important to Calvin's theology is the awareness that non-Christians are equally committed to justice as Christians. In some ways, non-Christians may be more committed to justice in their commitment may transcend their personal self-interest. However, the God of justice for Christians influences their motivation for pursuing and resisting injustice. If one acknowledges the God of justice, then the pursuit of justice cannot be reduce to a matter of enlightened self-interest. For the Christian one's passion for justice becomes a matter of consenting to the reality of God and conforming to God's demand for justice.¹⁷

Public Theology and Justice from A Latin-American Perspective

Public theology is one of the manifestations of the theological task we have today, and it arises from the perspective of influencing, from our faith, the political decisions of

¹⁶ Ottati, "What Reformed theology in a Calvinist key brings," 452.

¹⁷ Ottati, "What Reformed theology in a Calvinist key brings," 453.

different state institutions; it addresses not only the executive branch but all of public administration, especially in the search for the common good.¹⁸

One of the first academics to study the public sphere was the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas in his work *The structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category in Bourgeois Society*. Habermas offers a historical reconstruction of the birth, growth, and subsequent decline of the public bourgeois sector. In his research, he concludes that the rise of the public sphere takes place in the eighteenth century and that it developed as a social space distinct from the state, the family, and the economy, one in which individuals could make decisions regarding the common good beyond the influence of the state.¹⁹

Hobsbawm realized later that the inclusion of the church in public discourse and public policy would hold in tension the work of government and its responsibility to the people and the quest for common good. He says,

As long as religious communities remain a vital force in civil society, their contribution to the legitimation process reflects an at least indirect reference to religion, which “the political” retains even within a secular state. Although religion cannot be reduced to morality nor be assimilated to ethical value orientations, it nevertheless keeps alive an awareness of both elements.²⁰

Hobsbawm’s objective perspective helps the US understand the work of evangelical congregations in terms of the role of women, while the roles of females have expanded to include such positions as pastors, missionaries, or bishops in certain denominations, churches by and large maintain a staunch position against liberalized sexuality or certain

¹⁸ Tomás Gutiérrez Sánchez, "A Culture of Values and Justice: Public Theology through Latin American Protestant Christianity." *Journal Of Latin American Theology* 11, no. 2 (2016): 61-10, accessed July 8, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

¹⁹ Sánchez, "A Culture of Values and Justice," 65.

²⁰ Sánchez, "A Culture of Values and Justice," 66.

options for abortion, divorce, and homosexuality. Such positions defend traditional stability. Nevertheless, in terms of contemporary public discourse, evangelicalism gives the charismatic movement a conservative tilt. So does its propagation of the values of personal enterprise and economic advancement, which is reinforced by the conviction that the born-again Christian is destined to succeed.²¹

Within public theology are implied different expressions of the evangelical social thought native to our theology and praxis within Latin American realities. While this evangelical social thought has yet to be systematized, it has been documented in the different evangelical congresses and conferences held especially in the twentieth century, which have, in turn, become helpful resources for answering the challenges of contemporary society.²²

Looking by over the twentieth century, there are a variety of Protestant communities that have emerged to deal with issues of civil marriage, non-Catholic cemeteries, secular education, and the separation of church and state, among others, as well as the establishment of a democratic culture and democratic values in Latin American societies. These churches have worked with social justice movements to open up space for justice and liberty to take place. Many protestant youth are preparing themselves in fields of study that will allow them to assist in making life better for members of the community and for this reason, the practice of social justice as a part of public police and discourse is critical to the quality of life for Latin American people.²³

²¹ Sánchez, "A Culture of Values and Justice," 66.

²² Sánchez, "A Culture of Values and Justice," 70.

²³ Sánchez, "A Culture of Values and Justice," 70.

Social justice has taken on meaning for Latin American people in the way they feel about and treat one another. This is a direct result of the recognition that faithfulness to God is paramount to acting just in human community. Justice is the right of the rich and the poor. It is a right for people to live and die in anticipation of the resurrection of Jesus and the impetus for the people of Latin America to struggle to ensure that justice is available for all people. This justice is not the justice of humanity rather the justice of God.

Theology and Restorative Justice

“The whole trouble,” Leo Tolstoy wrote about the criminal justice system, “is that people think there are circumstances when one may deal with human beings without love, but no such circumstances ever exist. Human beings cannot be handled without love. It cannot be otherwise, because mutual love is the fundamental law of human life.” Our criminal justice system certainly is troubled by tendencies to treat some people (whether offenders or victims) without love, and the consequences are costly. From a Christian perspective, and simply for the sake of social well-being in our society, we need to challenge those tendencies.²⁴

The Western world’s understanding of the criminal justice system is based on the offender or criminal being punished for the crimes they commit, even to the point of death, since death is a certain reality for all of us. In this view, ultimate reality requires retributive justice when fundamental natural or divine laws are violated. Such retributive justice is seen to restore the moral balance. While this practice is normative and dates

²⁴ Peace Theology, “Theology and Retributive justice,” accessed July 8, 2017, <https://peace-theology.net/pacifism/13-theology-and-restorative-justice/>.

back to at least the Middle Ages, redistributive justice speaks to how God is understood by civilization. As time moved forward, justice was applied based on Roman law, which assumed a central authority, thus providing a basis for legitimate initiation of action by a neutral centralized dispenser of justice. In the medieval worldview, this centralized authority (church or state) was God's direct agent. By providing for prosecution by a central authority, it established a basis for attacking both heresy and clerical abuse within the church. The most extreme expression of this new approach was the Inquisition in which representatives of the pope ferreted out heretics and tortured them both to obtain evidence and to settle accounts.²⁵

Justice became a matter of applying rules, establishing guilt, and fixing penalties without reference to needs of the victim or the relationship between victim and offender. Crime was a sin, not just against a person but against God and it was the church's business to purge the world of this transgression. From this it was a short step to the assumption that the social order is willed by God, that crime is also a sin against this social order. The church (and later the state) must therefore enforce that order. Increasingly, focus centered on punishment by established authorities as a way of doing justice. By the time of the eighteenth century, this view was embedded in the western criminal justice system through our modern paradigm of "retributive justice," which might be characterized like this:

1. Crime is understood primarily as a violation of the law (unchanging, impersonal), and the state is the victim.
2. Offenders must get what they deserve: The aim of justice is to establish blame and administer pain to satisfy the demands of the moral balance in which the violation is countered by the punishment.

²⁵ Peace Theology, "Theology and Retributive justice."

3. The process of justice finds expression as a conflict between adversaries in which the offender is pitted against state rules and intentions outweigh outcomes and one side wins while the other side loses.

This paradigm of retributive justice that dominates Western criminal justice is a recipe for alienation. By making the satisfaction of impersonal justice the focus of our response to criminal activity, the personal human beings involved—victims, offenders, and community members—rarely find wholeness. The larger community's suffering often only increases. Rather than bringing restitution, healing and wholeness, the offender usually finds themselves alienated from the community, which results in an increase in recidivism.²⁶

The juxtaposition to retributive justice is restorative justice. When viewing the Bible based on restoration rather than retribution, a very different understanding and perspective of God can be obtained. Looking at the Bible through a lens of restorative justice, one can clearly see the logic of salvation. A proper reading of the Bible redefines justice and places God at the center of the restoration process, which ultimately changes the character of God. The Bible characterizes those who sin as people to be reconciled unto God rather than people who are the object of retribution, which is a very dehumanizing factor in their lives. Retribution rules out the love, peace, and hope that comes with God's justice. Holding love and justice together also guards against thinking of justice as an abstraction, separate from its function as a relationship-building, life-sustaining force. The concern for justice is people, much more than fairness, liberty, or entitlements. Biblical justice focuses on right relationships; not right rules. Biblical justice, thus, is primarily corrective or restorative. Justice seeks reconciliation and reparation. Injustice must be opposed and resisted—but only in ways that hold open the

²⁶ Peace Theology, "Theology and Retributive justice."

possibility of reconciliation. What happens to the offenders' matters, too, if justice is the goal. Corrective justice rules out death-dealing acts, such as capital punishment, as tools of justice.²⁷ Therefore, the God of the Bible is a God of restorative justice and not retribution that was practiced in the Middle Ages and as the law of Rome.

Black Theology and Justice

God is not dead—nor is he an indifferent onlooker at what is going on in this world. One day He will make requisition for blood; He will call the oppressors to account. Justice may sleep, but it never dies. The individual, race, or nation which does wrong, which sets at defiance Gods great law, especially Gods great law of love, of brotherhood, will be sure, sooner or later, to pay the penalty. We reap as we sow. With what measure we mete, it will be measured to us again.²⁸

The above statement was written by Francis Grimke in 1902, an ex-slave and Princeton Theological Seminary graduate, is an apt summary of the major themes of justice, hope, and love in African American religion from slavery to the present. According to James Cone, Black religious themes of justice, hope, and love are the product of black people's search for meaning in a white society that did not acknowledge their humanity. The most prominent theme in this trinity of divine virtues is the justice of God. Faith in God's righteousness is the starting point of Black religion. African Americans have always believed in the living presence of the God who establishes the right by punishing the wicked and liberating their victims from oppression. Everyone will be rewarded and punished according to their deeds, and no one—absolutely no one—can escape the judgment of God, who alone is the sovereign of the universe. Evildoers may

²⁷ Peace Theology, "Theology and Retributive Justice."

²⁸ James H. Cone, 2008, "God and Black suffering: calling the oppressors to account," *Anglican Theological Review* 90, no. 4: 701-712, accessed July 8, 2017, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost.

get by for a time, and good people may suffer unjustly under oppression, but "sooner or later,.. we reap as we sow."²⁹

For Cone, justice and hope are closely related. The theme of justice is closely related to the idea of hope. Therefore, since God is a God of justice, in the proper time, God will allow justice to prevail for those who have been victims of the unjust. Accordingly, the ideas of justice and hope as Cone see it should be seen in relation to the important theme of love. Theologically, God's love is above all. In order to separate love in the context of Black religion, there has to be a deliberate understanding that love and justice are synonymous when it comes to God. God's love is made known through divine righteousness, liberating the poor for a new future.³⁰

Because of God's love, all of human creation is sacred making them children of God. To violate this principle is to violate God's principle of love. Therefore, we must love our neighbor because God loves us. Because slavery and oppression is a direct contradiction to the love of God, there is an expectation that God will bring violators into account. Even though God's love is extended to all of his human creation, nonetheless, keeping faith in God was very difficult for African slaves and their descendants. If God is good, why did God permit millions of Blacks to be stolen from Africa, perish in the middle passage, and be enslaved in a strange land? No Black person has been able to escape the existential and profound agony of that question.

In their attempt to resolve the existential and theological dilemma that slavery and segregation created, African Americans in the nineteenth century turned to two texts: Exodus and Psalm 68:31. The Exodus text reminds African Americans that God is a

²⁹ Cone, "God and Black suffering," 703.

³⁰ Cone, "God and Black suffering," 704.

liberator and Psalm reminds them that God will redeem his people. Throughout the twentieth century, African Americans have struggled to reconcile their sense of injustice and unfair treatment to the love and justice of God. A twenty-six-year-old Baptist preacher by the name of Martin Luther King, Jr., empowered by Black faith confronted white and condemned it as the greatest moral evil in American society. He organized a movement that broke the backbone of legal segregation in the South. From the beginning of his role as the leader of the year-long Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott (1955-1956) to his tragic death in Memphis, Tennessee (April 4, 1968), Martin King was a public embodiment of black faith—its ideas of love, justice, and hope. If you want to know what black faith means by love, justice, and hope, take a look at the life of Martin Luther King, Jr.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

As we have seen from the previous foundation documents, social justice and social activism is a significant part of life. There seems to be a perpetual tension between justice and injustice in almost every aspect of human existence. From the beginning of time and the creation of humanity, people have been struggling with embracing one another as people of sacred worth whose value is equal in the sight of God. Almost every people group that sees themselves marginalized, oppressed and abused have formed social justice movements to combat the onslaught of outright injustice. This foundation will look at several models that have been implemented across various disciplines that seek to provide a measure of equality, fair play, and justice.

Educational Models of Justice

Teaching for social justice is a model that recognizes Teaching for Social Justice (TSJ) as an essential component of our programs to prepare candidates to help all students learn, grow, and flourish. Its goal is that candidates will become advocates for all children, proactively resisting/addressing injustice within and beyond the classroom. A common social and pedagogical vision unites this collection. This vision is characterized by several interlocking components that together comprise a social justice classroom...we argue that curriculum and classroom practice must be:

- Grounded in the lives of our students
- Critical
- Multicultural, anti-racist, pro-justice
- Participatory, experiential
- Hopeful, joyful, kind, visionary
- Activist
- Academically rigorous
- Culturally sensitive¹

Within TSJ, there are seven models recognizing that no one educational system and context is similar:

- Model 1— Difference, Injustice and Justice. This model, derived from Derman-Sparks & the A.B.C. Task Force (1989), has three key components:
 - Recognize and value difference
 - Identify and name injustice
 - Talk about and plan to address injustice
- Model 2 — Critical Lens. This model develops a critical lens for viewing the world (Banks & McGee Banks, 1997) that includes recognizing patterns of privilege and/or disadvantage; identifying and unpacking stereotypes; and noticing how social attitudes result in the valuing or devaluing of people from particular social groups.
- Model 3 — The Simulations of Exclusion. This model begins with a classroom simulation that is designed so that some of the students are purposely left out of some classroom activity, denied classroom privileges, or denied the use of their sight, hearing, hands, or mobility. During the simulation, the teacher often makes the situation more frustrating by doing or saying things that further handicaps the excluded students.

¹ Models that Link Teaching For Social Justice, accessed July 6, 2017, https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;_ylt=A0LEV7s6mXdZBAUA64MPxQt;_ylu=X3oDMTEwNzJpNmJ.

- **Model 4 — Critical Studies of Cultural.** This model teaches about cultural groups (within the US or beyond) in a way that includes multiple perspectives, issues of power and privilege, dominance or subordination, privilege or exclusion, advantage or disadvantage. Here the term critical refers to considering issues of oppression or injustice within the lessons.
- **Model 5 — Critical Culturally Relevant Teaching** call on teachers to include the lived experiences of their students within the lessons. In this model, we focus on understanding the general cultural experiences and backgrounds of the students in the teacher's classroom. In the next model, we will focus on teachers attending to the unique (according to time and place) day-to-day experiences students bring into the classroom.
- **Model 6 — Authentic learning.** This model calls on teachers to include the lived experiences of their students within the lessons. In this model, we focus on the specific day-to-day experiences, or the unique interests of the students in the teacher's classroom.
- **Model 7 Anti-Oppression Work.** This model reflects efforts of teachers who infuse a vision of working for social justice across several lessons and/or units (and/or weeks or months) of the year's curriculum. In this approach, teachers might begin the year (or month, etc.) talking about the human struggle for justice, or the on-going development of just and democratic communities, or the trail of everyday heroes throughout a community's history, or any other of a number of themes that would allow for discussions of injustice to be included within the school year.²

Within each of these models is enough room for educators to modify the suggested curriculum to meet the need of the context and the social and ethical mores and demographics of the surrounding population.

Social Change Leadership Model

According to the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE), leadership is a process, not a position. Through the Social Change Model of Leadership (SCM), leadership rests on the values of equity, social justice, self-knowledge, personal empowerment, collaboration, citizenship, and service. The CCE uses the SCM as a lens with which to understand

² Models that Link Teaching For Social Justice.

community engagement and change. The Higher Education Research Institute describes leadership as:

All people are potential leaders. Leadership involves collaborative relationships that lead to collective action grounded in the shared values of people who work together to effect positive change.³

This view on leadership is inclusive and is essential to creating a better world for us all. To support this view of leadership, the CCE collaborates with a variety of community organizations to offer civic engagement experiences. CCE seek to provide students an opportunity to learn about themselves through learning about the components of their community. Its goal through these activities is to create change.

The basis of the CCE model is grounded in three basic principles, group values, individual values, and social values and seven values, known as the seven C's:

- Collaboration
- Common Purpose
- Controversy with Civility
- Citizenship
- Consciousness of Self
- Congruence
- Commitment⁴

In the SCM, an individual can enter the process at any point: as an individual, as part of a group, or as a member of society. Within each component, you will find values that are important to creating change. Change is the hub, which the SCM revolves

³ Center for Civic Engagement, "The Social Change Model of Leadership," accessed July 5, 2017, <http://cce.wsu.edu/about/social-change-model/>.

⁴ Center for Civic Engagement.

around. Therefore, the goal of this model is to have students or participants become aware that change is necessary for justice to occur within people groups.

The Social Disability Model

According to the social model of disability, 'disability' is socially constructed. The social model of disability contrasts with what is called the medical model of disability. According to the medical model of disability, 'disability' is a health condition dealt with by medical professionals. People with disability are thought to be different to what is normal or abnormal. Disability is seen to be a problem of the individual. From the medical model, a person with disability is in need of being fixed or cured. From this point of view, disability is a tragedy and people with disability are to be pitied. The medical model of disability is all about what a person cannot do and cannot be.⁵

The social model sees disability is the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication, and social barriers. It therefore carries the implication that the physical, attitudinal, communication and social environment must change to enable people living with impairments to participate in society on an equal basis with others. A social model perspective does not deny the reality of impairment nor its impact on the individual. However, it does challenge the physical, attitudinal, communication, and social environment to accommodate impairment as an expected incident of human diversity. The social model seeks to change society in order to accommodate people living with impairment; it does not seek to change persons with impairment to

⁵ The Social Disability Model, accessed July 5, 2017, <http://www.pwd.org.au/student-section/the-social-model-of-disability.html>.

accommodate society. It supports the view that people with disability have a right to be fully participating citizens on an equal basis with others.

The social model of disability is now the internationally recognized way to view and address disability. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) marks the official paradigm shift in attitudes towards people with disability and approaches to disability concerns. People with disability are not objects of charity, medical treatment and social protection but subjects with rights, capable of claiming those rights, able to make decisions for their own lives based on their free and informed consent and be active members of society.⁶

In this context:

- Impairment is a medical condition that leads to disability.
- Disability is the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and barriers in the physical, attitudinal, communication, and social environment.

It is not the inability to walk that keeps a person from entering a building by themselves but the stairs that are inaccessible that keeps a wheelchair-user from entering that building. This model seeks to provide access to all persons with disabilities so that they may equally participate in all aspects of human life similar to those who do not have similar disabilities.

Community Organizing Model

Congregation Based Community Organization (CBCO) are coalitions that are locally based or constituted whose primary focus is to train leaders in the community to deal with the varied and multiple problems that face the community and metropolitan

⁶ The Social Disability Model.

area. CBCOs are usually staffed by professional organizers who train local members of the community to building relationships within and across their institutions as a basis for public action.⁷

Relationships among the member institutions of a CBCO coalition and among those institutions' own members builds power to be projected in the public arena in a clearly political but nonpartisan manner. Rather than directly campaigning for particular candidates, CBCOs work mostly with already-elected politicians and raise only an implied electoral threat by their often-large number of participants. CBCOs differentiate their main work of organizing (empowering people to fight for justice) from either directly executing projects of community economic development or directly providing social services, although some CBCOs do engage in these as a subsidiary to their organizing.

Although CBCO addresses multiple issues, there are four main areas where they concentrate their efforts based on historical success:

1. Education and Schools — public school reform, after- school programs, charter schools, safe schools
2. Local Economy — Economic development initiatives, living-wage ordinances, work-force development
3. Affordable Housing for poor people and elderly people
4. Policing— Community-police relations, restorative justice, and prevention of gang and police violence⁸

⁷ Jeremy D. Posadas, 2008, "Community organizing as congregational practice: social-scientific and theological perspectives," *International Journal Of Practical Theology* 12, no. 2: 274-294, accessed July 15, 2017, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost, 277.

⁸ Posadas, "Community organizing as congregational practice," 278-9.

In addition to the above-mentioned main areas of focus, CBOCs also work with issues such as healthcare, public finance, environmental protection, and other, mostly local issues. There are several issues that the CBCO does not take up because of the diversity of concerns, issues, and views of its member congregations. Some of the most noted issues that are not addressed by the CBCO are:

- Culture Wars
- Progressive Politics
- Reproductive Choice
- The Death Penalty
- LGBTQ community⁹

The model that most all CBCO organizations use to organize people to deal with community based issues is as follows:

1. One-to-One Conversations
One-to-one conversations, also known as individual meetings or simply one-to-ones, or face –to-face meetings between two people, in which they share their personal stories, and reflect on their values, hopes and concerns. The two participants in these conversations may be people who know each other from church, but have never shared with each other issues that matter to them, or may be two people who have never before met.
2. House Meetings
House meetings are small group conversations in which a number of congregants gather in one member's home to share personal stories and to talk about issues of concern. During the exploratory stage of CBCO, the house meeting can also provide a forum for introducing the concept of this type of organizing and for discussing the possibility of joining an ecumenical/ interfaith network.
3. Listening Campaign
When a congregation begins to explore CBCO, and as it engages in the organizing process, it will often conduct a "listening campaign," a series of one-to-one and house meetings held over a period of a few months.

⁹ Posadas, "Community organizing as congregational practice," 279.

4. Identifying issues to address
Through one-to-one meetings and house meetings, concrete issues emerge. Issues most often identified by congregants—for example, access to health care, affordable housing, or care for the elderly—become the focus of action. For an issue to move forward, it must have strong support as a priority from CBCO member congregations.
5. Researching the issues and developing solutions
Once an issue has been chosen, a congregation works independently as a group or with other members of the CBCO. It researches the identified problems and possible solutions by holding seminars with experts, meeting with public or private officials, and talking with people who are knowledgeable about the issue.
6. Meeting with public officials, corporate officials, or both
The next step is to present solutions to public officials, corporate officials, or both and ask for their support and assistance. Typically, the leadership holds a series of smaller meetings with officials that culminates in a large public meeting, often involving thousands of people, where the officials are asked to publicly announce their support for the campaign.
7. Winning the issue, holding the institutions accountable and moving on to the next one
Once the issue is resolved, the CBCO group continues to monitor and hold accountable the institutions impacted by the issue. The CBCO then moves on to a different issue. CBCO groups are designated to address multiple issues over time in order to bring in and maintain interest from the largest number of people possible. CBCO groups are not single-issue-campaign organizations.¹⁰

Through each of these steps, the pastor and a core leadership team from the congregation take leadership roles by speaking at, organizing, running, and hosting meetings large and small. In addition, they attend local, regional, and/or national training to develop their leadership skills.

It is interesting to note that although community organizing is a well-established method of bringing change and social justice reform for an identified community. There is also a process that determines how the organizing organization takes shape.

¹⁰ Congregation Based Community Organizing, accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/pact-cbco.pdf>.

Consideration is given to conflict theory and its assumptions about the oppression of certain groups in all models of community practice. Some of the considerations are:

1. Mission of the organization that employs the organizer.
2. Preferences of organization constituents or beneficiaries.
3. Constituent needs and cultural values.
4. The organizer's theoretical framework.
5. The organizer's personality (consensus or conflict-oriented)
6. The organizing problem or situation.
7. Ethical issues related to using particular interventions.¹¹

These considerations are critical to the success of the organization as not all organizations struggle with similar context, demographics, and ethnic concerns. Provided an organization is structured properly and the members of the organization are effectively trained in the organizing principles listed above, a greater sense of ownership and power is garnered by the group. Social justice actions are most effective when the organization taking the action is properly equipped to have good success.

Another community organizing model used to bring social action and change is the offered by the Rural Health Information Hub. This group says, the Community Organization Model is a participatory decision-making process that empowers communities to improve health. It emphasizes active participation in identifying key

¹¹ Models of Community Organizing, accessed July 20, 2017, https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?hspar=Lkry&hsimp=yhs-SF01&ts=sy&st=ds&type=TGE_ cee726&u_ip=68.96.24.184&obt9bpdyed=0&p=community+organizing+models¶m1=ij7zzSxCeE_ZFQBIS4_0ltX0CcY9kavy3j1MxplDHRep1R_I7qG46T5GdRJT3CglOtczzBXanNGfc1OqoYdU1RP3MRT0HFkGuZ37mFvZnfwVahfmijC6bxxSippj20dBbF71goQAdUSEidsp8AtWBa_zg%2c.

health issues and strategies to address them. Communities focus on their strengths and collectively mobilize to develop programs to achieve health goals.¹²

Characteristics of the Community Organization Model include:

- Understanding the context and root causes of health issues
- Collaborative decision making and problem solving
- Focusing efforts on specific issues
- Actively engaging participation from various groups and organizations within the community
- Developing and maintaining capacity and power to produce lasting change
- Providing feedback to the community

¹² Rural Health Information Hub, accessed July 20, 2017, <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/community-health/health-promotion/2/program-models/community-organization>.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

It is abundantly clear, no matter where you look, there are ongoing signs of social injustice that are woven in the fabric of our American culture and society. In the last few months, we have witnessed the powerful prey on the vulnerable and take advantage of persons they have authority over. We have seen significant iconic figures fall from stardom because of various forms of sexual abuse. We have entertained the notion of debating the difference between an accusation of wrongdoing and alleged wrongdoing; all in the name of seeking justice. There is something significantly wrong when as a society we seek to hide the illegal and immoral actions of the rich and famous at the expense of the weak, and vulnerable. There is something morally wrong when we make decisions based on popularity rather than fitness.

In each of these examples, social injustice has run amok and those who have the power to make a difference seem to bury their heads in the sand and dismiss these systemic problems altogether. The problems have not gone away and they will not go away until something is done to systemically address them.

At the onset of doing the research for this project, the level of social injustice in America seemed to be at an all time high. Injustice in any form was being fought in the press, on the streets, and in the courts. Since the time of civil rights and the subsequent

civil rights movement that led to the civil rights amendment, it seems as though people from all walks of life are seeking some form of justice. However, this project was not designed to highlight the number of ways that social injustice seems to have life, rather, it was designed to educate, empower and energize people of the local church to take action to help those who are not able to help themselves.

The goal and objective of this doctor of ministry project was to establish a viable church based social justice ministry to meet the relevant needs of the people of the community surrounding the church. The hypothesis was that if a social justice ministry were established in the context, a reduction of social injustice would occur. The methodology for this project was qualitative using the mixed method approach to analyze the data. A workshop on social justice, Bible studies, a sermon series, and pre and post-test questionnaires were used to gather data for analysis. The results of this project indicated the church's willingness to engage and embrace social justice ministries for the sake of the church and the community.

Methodology

In the restoration of the Holy City of Jerusalem, Nehemiah made an assessment of the devastation and destruction and then went before the people and encouraged them to take action. He then devised a plan of action that allowed the Israelites who returned from exile to participate in a way that provided protection, hope, and unity among them. It is from this perspective that the social justice ministry will be birthed at the Allen Chapel AME church. In order for the community around the church to be restored and return to

the once peaceful and safe community of its yesteryears, the church must lead the way in establishing ministries that demonstrate the desire and willingness for restoration.

Understanding that as a community of faith, God required the people to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with Him. God also requires the community of faith to be in love and fellowship with their neighbor. In prior years, the church lost its connection with the community and now stands in a strategic position to be the difference that makes the difference in restoring the life of the community.

The church can ill-afford to do justice, love mercy, and walk with God within the safety of the walls of its facilities. The church must spill out into the community to become reconnected to the many neighbors who live there. As the church, it is next to impossible to isolate itself from the community and then expect the community to come to faith in Jesus Christ just because the building is there. The church has to extend gracious hospitality to its neighbors and at times, become uncomfortable in working with them to meet their needs. It has to also teach the value and benefits of unity in the body of Christ which over time will lead to a healthier and more vital community.

In order to prepare the congregation for social justice and social activism, this project will endeavor to preach, teach, and empower its members toward a level of sensitivity that will cause an awakening in their spirit to do something about the conditions surrounding its facility, similar to what Nehemiah did. What follows is a detailed description how the project methodology was crafted.

Implementation

Sermon Series

A four part sermon series was preached over a four-week period on social justice. The sermon series was designed to quicken the hearts of the members to have a hunger for those beyond themselves and to return to its first love by doing God's will in the life of the community. Two sermons were taken from the book of Micah and two sermons were taken from the gospel of Luke, which were the biblical foundations for this project.

The sermons from the book of Micah focused on the difference in being a prophet and doing the prophetic work of the prophet. These sermons illustrated how God comes to the aid of the poor, the powerless, and the needy. As a congregation, the church has to be the prophet by doing prophetic ministry among the people of the community. Without a prophet to lead and guide the people, the people will suffer unnecessary hardship. God sends the prophet to live among the people and encourage them to worship, pray, serve, and be faithful to the will of God. By doing so, the people would reap a great harvest of blessings. The prophet warns the people about their sin and failing to do God's will. He also gives them words of encouragement that leads them to being restored as a people and being restored with God.

Open ended questions were used to determine the participant's level of understand of the sermons preached. Below are the questions that the participants were asked to respond to after each sermon. The answers that were given from the sermons preached from the book of Micah were grouped based on general categories of responses.

Question 1: What do you believe is your responsibility in meeting the needs of those less fortunate than you?

Help, Support, Encourage
Help where I can, make my time more available, be humble
To access the less fortunate need aid, help them find the resources they need, be humble in every way
To help other people
Try to provide for the less fortunate
To help those who can't help themselves
To support and encourage others, to witness tell of God's goodness
Reach out and help people in their time of need
To empower others

Compassion
To be compassionate towards them and their needs. Moreover, give them better than you would give to your self.
Be proactive and sensitive to the needs of the poor and ministering to their needs
To reach out and be of help

Doing What God Requires
To do what God requires with more enthusiasm
To do what is right, to love others
Show mercy toward our brothers and sisters. Serve each other and forgive
Treat people with respect, provide for them, show love in a godly fashion
Act justly

Sharing With Others
Share with others what I have. Guide the less fortunate to resources that can help them

Understanding Needs
Understanding the needs of people, be more accessible

Teaching
Teach those in need to be self-sufficient

Being Involved
Speak and standup for those who can not speak for themselves
To be involved as an individual

Helping, Supporting and Encouraging received the most comments indicating that most of the participants believed that to help those less fortunate than themselves, they must do something to improve their quality of life. Doing what God requires received the second most comments indicating that if those less fortunate are to be blessed, those who have more must act justly and share their blessings. Showing compassion received the third most comments. Compassion is to go out of your way to help the physical, mental, or emotional pains of another and themselves. While other categories received comments, it is clear that if the less fortunate are to be blessed, people must act justly, help, encourage, and show compassion.

Question 2: What is your understanding of doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with God?

Loving Everyone
We need to love everyone, even the unlovable, help when we can, make ourselves available to serve where we're need not so much as where we'd like to serve
Non-judgmental, be compassionate, love in a godly fashion
Caring for others
Having compassion for others
Caring for others. God desires that all creation flourishes

Reflecting God
Reflect God is my understanding of doing justice, mercy and waling humbly
Justice is the correct thing to do, serve without seeking credit

Being Just To All
To be just to all, especially those who are lost
This is what God requires us to do
Making sure all people are treated justly

Studying God's Word
Study God's word and be able to lend help with love, mercy and fairness

Getting Involved
To be of help and not turn my back on others
To get involved
Helping people get on their feet, be able to stand up for the poor, help them live a better life
More interaction with all of God's people

Knowing The Need of The Church
I first need to know and understand the needs of the church
We must participate in our own congregation and beyond
Help someone as I pass them by
To help those around me
To get out and work in the community

Loving everyone received the most comments indicating that the basis for doing what God requires begins with loving others regardless of who they are. Knowing the needs of the church received the second most comments. By knowing the needs of the church, members are compelled to develop ministries to meet the needs of others. Getting involved received the third most comments. In order to be effective in meeting needs, members must get involved. When members know the needs of the church and love, they are able to get involved and make a difference in the lives of others beyond the church.

Question 3: How does this understanding impact your role in the life of the Church?

Being More Christ Like
Been praying for deliverance for quite some time, striving to be more Christ-like, allow God to use me
Love our brothers and sisters, be kind to one another
To share the gifts God has provided me with others
Always be on guard, keep around your own door clean

Showing Empathy and Compassion
It makes me empathize with them, because no one knows their struggles, their hurts, and their pain

Doing More
It inspires me to do more
Spread the word and encourage others to participate
To become more involved
It encourages one to reach out to all ages including the less fortunate and non-believers
It helped me to feel that I am doing what is required of me in this lifetime
Reaching out to the least
Continue to seek ways to serve
Help support others, love everyone. Testify of God goodness

Doing More With Church Ministries
Work harder within the church to see to it that we have resources to share
To let members and people know the church is here for them
Get involved in justice ministry of Allen Chapel
This understanding helps me to do better in my participation in church

Do Not Know
I do not know
Not sure

Doing more and doing more with church ministries received the most comments respectively. This is a strong indication that the sermon impressed upon the participants

that in order to be pleasing in the sight of God and doing what God requires necessitates willingness to do more individually and as a church body.

Question 4: Identify how you will increase your participation in the outreach ministry of the church?

Willing To Participate
Be a willing and able participant to the ministry
I will do my best to participate; if I do not come, I will send someone
Become more involved and participate more in ministry
Become more involved within the community to find help
Be ready to get involved
By expanding my outreach
Love others, be kind and forgiving
Continue to do what is called upon me to do and help in every way I can
Volunteer where I can best be used
Sharing with others
Intentionally give of my time and resources to help other
Do all I can outside the four walls of the church
Feeding the hungry
Meet with team leaders in the church when requested
Answer the call, support the ministry
Intentionally give of my time and resources to help others

Working For Justice
Continue to work for justice for all

Showing More Compassion
Show more compassion and be ready to assist in any way possible

Not Sure
I don't know. Whatever I am called to do
Not sure

An overwhelming number of participants indicated they were willing to do more to increase the outreach ministry of the church. Based on the overall responses from the

participants, provides a strong indication that the church can effectively develop a justice ministry to meet the needs of the people in the community surrounding the church.

The sermons from the book of Luke dealt with expanding the members understanding of what God considers a neighbor and the responsibility of being a good neighbor to more than just the members of the church. The parable of the Good Samaritan was used as the example of what it means to love people who are in need, regardless if they are a member of the church or not. It demonstrated the level of love and compassion required to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ and a neighbor according to God's providential will.

The questions for the sermon series were opened-ended to allow the members or participants to share what God has put in their spirit regarding the text and the need for a social justice ministry. The answers that were given for the sermons preached from the book of Luke were grouped based on general categories of responses.

Question 1: What would your response have been if you saw the man on the side of the road?

Provide Assistance
Stop, ask if he's alright, try to assist
Take the time to offer assistance
Willingness to give of myself, home and possessions
Stop and help him
I would go over to see if he needs help
Call for help and administer first aid
Give some type of help
Stop and help out
Stop and help
Help in anyway I can
That could have been me. Stop and give help and money
Stop, inquire and assist
I would try to help
To see what I may be able to do
Stop and give help

Helping him in any way I can
To help him

Pass By
Pass by and wonder why he was there. We were taught not to go up to strangers

Most of the participants stated that if they saw a man on the side of the road, they would provide him assistance. Providing assistance goes to the heart of social justice ministry. Providing assistance indicates awareness that all people should be granted an equal opportunity to have a greater quality of life. Based on the sermon, participants were made aware of the importance of helping people in need.

Question 2: How has this sermon changed your understanding of being a neighbor?

Lending a Helping Hand
Step up the game, do even more, take out neighbor's trash, rake yard etc.
Transparency, no limitations, help where help is needed
To get closer and help out
To comfort others and how important it is to be a good neighbor
God place us on earth to be a blessing to others. I must be willing to do so
Help those who need help

Not really
Not really, I help when I can regardless of their economic status

Obeying God and Humility
Obey God and be humble, show love, continue to be caring
Do unto others as you want done unto you
Living rightly
In spite of how your neighbor treats you, always be Christ-like
Be more loving and humble

Not Sure
Sometimes I have empty feelings inside

Awareness
It has enhanced my understanding and my feelings. Sometimes I feel guilty
Our neighbor does not have to be someone next door, it could be anyone
It is rarely used in the way that Jesus uses it
Give of yourself, help others, not be judgmental of anyone
I thought it was the person next door; now I know everyone is my neighbor

When asked how this the sermon changed your awareness of being a neighbor, lending a helping hand, obeying God and awareness received the most comments. It is impossible to be a neighbor without helping the person you consider a neighbor. When you help your neighbor, you become obedient to the Word of God by doing as God requires. According to the responses, the participants expanded their understanding of who is a neighbor, which makes developing a social justice ministry possible in the life of the church.

Question 3: As a Christian, how do you feel when you do not help people who reach out to you with need?

Not Sure
Not showing love
I try to do as the spirit leads. Some people who ask don't really need help

Good, Neighborly
Share my resources
I feel good
Neighborly
Being compassionate and getting involved
It gives me a feeling I can't explain
It make you feel good to help someone

Sad, Guilty, Missed Opportunity
Inwardly, very sad because I know better but have not done better
I would feel guilty if I don't help a person who has a need
I feel I missed an opportunity to bless someone
Bad if I can help
Bad because I want to be a servant of God
I feel disappointed and convicted
After thoughts, question myself
My spirit feels convicted
Terrible. I ask God for strength

There were mixed emotions based on the responses to the question of not helping a person in need. More of the responses stated the participants would feel sad, guilty or they would have missed an opportunity to do as God requires. The other responses were based on feeling good to assist a person in need. This is an indication that either the participants did not fully understand the question or the question was worded poorly. Non-the-less, feeling bad is an indication that when we do not help those in need, God is not pleased. A bad feeling would compel participants to want to do more to assist those in need and be pleasing to God.

Question 4: Why is it important to be a neighbor according to God's will?

Blessings
What you do for others, God will make it happen for you
God want us to love people and be a blessing to others
Because he expects us to be his hands and feet. We are blessed to be a blessing
To get blessed
It makes me feel strong in Christ

Helping
To help others
Display kindness, love, sharing and helping
It teaches how to be concerned about other people and makes you grow in love
Contribute more time talking to people, giving what I am able

I have to be unselfish towards others

Eternal Life
We will have eternal life if we show love and be obedient
We have to be a neighbor if we have any hopes of being received in heaven

God Commands It
God commands we be good neighbors and keep his commandment
Because it is what God expects and requires us to do for each other
It makes me feel strong in Christ
Love our neighbor as ourselves
Love your neighbor as yourself
Pleases God
We are to serve wholeheartedly as if we were serving the Lord

When asked why is it important to be a good neighbor according to God's will, God requires it, receiving blessings and helping others received the most responses. God requires us to be a blessing to those in need. As we are blessed, we should go and bless others. These responses make establishing a justice ministry in the life of Allen Chapel church possible.

Bible Study

The Bible study series allowed the participant to delve deeper into the meaning of the sermons that were preached. The inductive method of Bible study was used allowing participants to gain a critical understanding of the biblical text and how the text applies to their lives on today.

An inductive Bible study is an approach to God's Word focusing on three basic steps that move from a general overview to specifics. Through these three steps,

inductive reasoning is applied, which is defined as the attempt to use information about a specific situation to draw a conclusion. The steps are observation (what does the passage say?), interpretation (what does the passage mean?), and application (what does the passage mean for my life?).

Setting the context: “ABCs”

- Author — Who wrote the passage?
- Background — When did the author live? In what culture?
- Context — How does the passage fit in with what comes before and after it?

What does the passage say? (Observation)

- Pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance. Read and reread the passage. Read it in another version of the Bible if available.
- Gather all sorts of facts like an investigative reporter. Ask questions to help you observe the facts: Who? What happened? What was taught? When? Where? How? Why? This is where you see and discover what the author is saying.
- Locate and mark any key words, repeated words or phrases, and commands.

What does it mean? (Interpretation)

- What is the author’s intent in this passage? What is one principle or lesson the writer/God was trying to communicate? What was he saying to the people of his day? What would they have understood?
- Look at other scriptures that relate to the passage. These are usually found in the margins of Bibles or in footnotes. What do other verses say about this thought or idea?
- Use Bible study helps to get a clearer meaning of the passage as needed: commentaries, Bible dictionaries, concordances, Vine’s Expository Dictionary or a Bible study guide for the text, subject, or person you are studying. Use a dictionary to define any unfamiliar terms or ideas.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance. Why do you think God put this in the Bible?

How does the principle apply to one specific area of my life? (Application)

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to me in this passage? Ask Him.
- What is one way I can apply the heart of this passage to my life?
- What will I do differently because of what I have learned?

At the end of the inductive Bible study, the participants were asked a series of questions using a Likert Scale designed to measure people's attitudes, opinions, or perceptions. The answers for the Likert scale were measure based on the following range of possible answers: 5 = Highly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 2 = Did Not Agree; 1 = Highly Disagree.

Micah

Questions	Rating (% answered)				
	5	4	3	2	1
I did not fully understand the meaning of the text before the lesson	14	28	28	19	6
The lesson changed my understanding of the text	43	38	14	5	0
I was convicted by the lesson that was taught	43	28	19	0	5
The lesson empowered me to action	35	35	25	5	0
The lesson made me feel ashamed of my actions as a Christian	6	43	28	25	0
The lesson created a need to have a social justice ministry	25	52	19	0	0
More members of the church need to have this lesson	65	35	0	0	0
The lesson needs to be taught again for better clarity	38	25	28	5	0
After the lesson, I am willing to assist in forming a social justice ministry	6	25	47	0	0

The Bible study was taken from the same scripture that was preached. The responses from the sermons indicated a high understanding of what God required and why it was important to help others. When it came to the Bible study, the participant's scores indicate that more members of the church need to receive this lesson. However, a significant number of participants indicated that the lesson needed to be taught again for greater clarity. This raises questions as to nature of preaching and teaching. What was stated clearly in the sermon that was unclear when taught? Regardless of this anomaly, an overwhelming number of participants agreed that a social justice ministry should be established.

Luke

Questions	Rating (% answered)				
	5	4	3	2	1
I did not fully understand the meaning of the text before the lesson	9	26	17	26	21
The lesson changed my understanding of the text	50	27	15	4	4
I was convicted by the lesson that was taught	48	15	30	7	0
The lesson empowered me to action	50	42	4	0	0
The lesson made me feel ashamed of my actions as a Christian	4	23	31	31	12
The lesson created a need to have a social justice ministry	31	58	4	0	8
More members of the church need to have this lesson	65	19	8	0	8
The lesson needs to be taught again for better clarity	35	23	19	8	15
After the lesson, I am willing to assist in forming a social justice ministry	45	23	23	0	9

The responses to the Bible study according to the book of Luke had similar results as the text taught on the book of Micah. Participant's minds were changed regarding the meaning of the text, they were convicted by the text, and the text compelled them to want to establish a social justice ministry in the church. However, as with the Micah text, the participants wanted the text taught to a larger segment of the congregation and again for clarity.

Social Justice Workshop

The social justice workshop was designed to educate the participants on social justice, social activism, and the kinds of social justice ministries that may be possible for the church to engage in based on the resources available within the life of the church. Definitions of social justice and social activism, identification of social justice issues that are present in the community surrounding the church as well as identifying congregations who have active and thriving social justice ministries will be critical to glean information for possible inclusion in the newly established ministry of the church. The design of the workshop was a didactic lecture, Q &A and a final wrap up. The goal of the workshop was to impress upon the participants the importance of social justice and encourage them to assist the church in implementing a social justice ministry in the life of the church.

Below are the answers from the social justice workshop. The responses are grouped in the same manner as the sermon series. By grouping the responses in categories, it makes it easier to analyze and provide substantive discoveries.

Question 1: Why is it important to understand social justice as a church?

Understanding Christian Responsibility
So that we can understand our responsibility as Christians. We need to think of others in addition to our own families
There are people in our church, like me we really and do not understand what local social justice is.
It is important to understand social justice as a church to fulfill what God is requiring of us
I feel we need to know in whole we must apply this to our daily walk
It is important because God requires that we do justice, love mercy, walk humbly

Influencing Others
Our lives influence others, open our eyes to see need of others even if we don't live in need

Purposeful Outreach
So that as a church, we can serve God's people where the needs truly are in the community we are in.
Walk together sharing, compassionate caring
There are all types of people in the world, we should love our neighbor as our self
To be able to implement social justice in the community
It allows us given true and sound info in the community

Sharing, Caring, Helping
Coming to church, being actively participating to learn and go out among members in church and community serving
To be close to God. The church is here to do God's work. To care for the needed, depressed, the lonely etc.
We will see an increase in the membership, people will see we care about others and want to help others when there is a need
To learn our role in helping people and not just give lip service
It shows that the church cares about the community and teaches the church to have compassion

Meeting Needs
There are people out there in the world who need help in Christ. Welcome all people with open arms
To gather everything God has taught us to be a great help to his people in the community
To understand the needs of others, to be empowered to help others

Understanding Christian responsibility, purposeful outreach, and sharing and caring received the most responses. These responses indicated an understanding of the responsibility of social justice ministry in the life of the church. Purposeful outreach is the vehicle which social justice ministry could be implement and sharing and caring provides the stimulus for being aware of social justice.

Question 2: What are the benefits of establishing a social justice ministry in the church

Encouraging Others
So we can encourage other people and invite them to enjoy God along with us
Joy of service, growth in the community
Getting along. Aide in anyway you can
As Christians our responsibility is to exercise our compassion and love for others

Community Empowerment
Overcome obstacles in community, be compassionate, membership increase
To reach the people that are not reached by large organizations
The church cares for all of God's children and not just some

Understanding Needs
Clarity
It allow our brothers and sisters to see that there is a church that truly understand the needs of the community
It can help us to walk in the ways of the Lord. That way we can apply the scriptures to overcome the obstacles we face
I believe it will place balance in our lives, as long as we allow it
SO we can draw near to people in their difficult times, and help us meet the needs of ourselves.

Outreach
To get a better understanding of what caring for some else looks like
Reaching out to everyone
This will provide an opportunity in justice, direction for positive growth

Meeting Needs
It is a simple benefit – to meet the needs of the people
Spiritual maturity from God, being thankful for God’s help in meeting the peoples need, sense of accomplishment
Meet the needs of the people first
God wants us to fulfill his commission Go and make changes

When asked the benefits of establishing a social justice ministry in the church, the most responses were meeting needs, helping others, and expanding outreach. This shows awareness by the participants that in order to have a successful social justice ministry, creating ministries beyond themselves that meet the relevant needs of the community is important. Understanding the needs of others was also important in establishing a social justice ministry. Without knowing the needs of those around you, the ministry will not be successful.

Question 3: What ways can the church act responsibly when it comes to social justice?

Meeting Needs and Helping
We need to go into the community and see the need then help wherever we can.
Go to the “hood” Find ways to serve, teach discipline
Meeting people’s needs can help people know God for themselves. Increasing in numbers and serving larger areas
To learn and help others
Simple – Act like you truly care, be there at all times
Being a leader in the community, when they reach out to the masses expect to open your doors to all not just some
Encourage people
Meeting the needs of the people who need help
By helping the downtrodden and need people to show compassion to others
See around your and do what you can to make a difference

Becoming Less Judgmental
Don't judge people by the way they look
Not to judge the less fortunate

Expanding Outreach
By developing disciples
Be well prepared in your efforts, don't give up on your goals
More teaching
Empower its members to do God's will the correct way
By implementing ministries to reach smaller masses of people
By working with organizations that speak politically to the elected to serve God's people

When asked how could the church act responsibly when it comes to social justice, meeting needs, and helping others and expanding outreach gained the most responses.

The church acts responsibly when they implement ministries that meet the needs of those around them. The opposite is true when needs are not met. If a church is serious about establishing a social justice ministry, it must be intentional about meeting needs.

Question 4: What are the possible risks and benefits in establishing a social justice ministry for the church?

Negative Reception
People might not receive us but keep going and let God do the rest
Not using your gifts as a congregation is a waste of time and the church can develop a bad reputation in the community
Opposition from negative people
Opening up for criticism
People may turn their backs and walk away and may not want us to share because we as Christians aren't leading by example
Offend those that do not want to help others

Expanding Opportunities
Ministry happens, make a difference outside the walls instead of making noise
Take the risk to share your experience will benefit people who feel lost

The benefits are blessings which outweighs risks
The type of people will be from all social makeup (rich, poor, sinner, etc.) When a church not judge it's members accept as Jesus would
I only see benefits

Not Prepared to Serve
People must understand how to treat people in a godly way
The risks are not being a comfort zone

Helping Others
To help people and reach all
To speak out and defend the wrong side of the moral issue. The joy of helping someone
Fear of the unknown

Legal Problems
To lose its tax exempt status, division in the church, end up helping people who do not really need the help
Going against the establishment but doing what God really wants
Help others, encourage others, be compassionate to others, show love at all times

The participants said the greatest risk in establishing a social justice ministry was negative reception and legal issues. Negative reception was given based on the perception of the church based on a lack of serving the needs of the community in the past. Legal issues was given based on the possibility of losing the church's not for profit status if not structured properly. The benefits that were given centered around the opportunity to expand meaningful ministries of the church beyond its walls.

Pre and Post-test Questionnaire

A pre and post-test questionnaire was given to determine the level of growth and understanding the participants gain as a result of participating in the project.

The pre test questionnaire was administered on the first day the participants gathered. The pre test determined the initial level of knowledge the participants had regarding social justice and activism. At the end of the project, a post-test questionnaire was administered to determine changes if any in the participant's level of understanding as a result of the ministry program. The answers for the pre/post test used a Likert scale based on the following range of possible answers: 5 = Highly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 2 = Did Not Agree; 1 = Highly Disagree.

Pre/Post Test Results

Questions	Rating (% answered)				
	5	4	3	2	1
Are you aware of what social justice is	40	50	10	0	0
	64	24	12	0	0
Are you aware of any social justice ministries in your Church	49	26	20	5	0
	49	24	18	9	0
Are you aware of any social justice ministries in your community	49	39	12	0	0
	59	12	24	5	0
Social justice ministries are for the benefit of the larger community	41	19	15	11	14
	29	12	12	29	18
Social justice ministries should not be established in the church	3	14	4	17	62
	6	6	6	24	59
Social justice is a new phenomenon in America	0	20	17	24	40
	6	18	29	18	29

Social justice empowers people to improve the quality of their lives	48	34	14	3	0
	65	12	5	12	6
Social justice ministry is very difficult to establish	11	18	18	25	28
	24	18	24	18	16
I know of at least one church who is involved in church-based social justice	66	21	3	7	3
	59	18	6	6	12
It would be of great benefit if our church is involved in social justice	63	27	6	0	1
	88	6	0	0	6

The responses regarding awareness of social justice ministries indicated that a significant increase occurred in the responses. This indicates that the ministry program provided the participants sufficient information to grown in their knowledge of the importance of social justice ministries. Based on these responses, there was an increase in the number of participants who believed that a social justice ministry should be implemented at Allen Chapel church.

Interesting to notes is that very few of the participants were aware of churches in the area who participate in social justice ministry. While the participants know that social justice is not a new phenomenon, they agree that establishing a social justice ministry at Allen Chapel church would be a great benefit for the church and the community.

Conclusion

Overall, this ministry project was successful. The problem identified at the beginning of the project was a lack of social justice awareness and commitment by the

members of the church. The hypothesis for the project was if a social justice ministry were established in the context, a reduction of social injustice would occur. The project was implemented based on a mixed-method approach using sermons, Bible studies, a workshop, and a pre/post test. Data triangulation was used to test the hypothesis and findings from the field study.

The results from the project implementation and data triangulation indicated that when members of the congregation are made aware of the necessity of social justice ministries in the life of the church, members would be compelled to do what God required, provide assistance to those less fortunate, and strive to develop ministries that would meet the relevant needs of the church and the larger community surrounding the church.

The participants were engaged from the beginning to the end of the project. They were highly interested in knowing how they could make a difference in the lives of people who were not members of the church but needed assistance in various areas of their lives. A key learning from the project was the participant's interest in how a social justice ministry could be developed for Allen Chapel. Participants were well versed on the social ills and issues that existed, however, they did not see the church as a viable place for these needs to be met. While the church was a member of a social justice organization called FAITH, it was its belief that the work of doing social justice was the responsibility of the organization alone. Once members were educated on the responsibility of the local church in addressing the social ills and issues of the community a positive shift occurred among them.

It has become abundantly clear that knowledge of the synergy between pastor and people has made a significant difference in directing the church toward a vision of social justice ministry. Without this knowledge, social justice and social justice ministry would not be a possibility for Allen Chapel.

The task at hand today is to expand the number of members who are aware of the importance of social justice ministry for the church. Once this awareness is expanded, the church can embark on reallocating funds and people resources to doing ministry outside the walls of the church. The community surrounding Allen Chapel church is in dire need of transformation. Crime, drugs and apathy plague the community, especially those who are growing in age and have little resources to move or make a significant difference in the quality of their lives. Establishing a social justice ministry will allow the church to once again become a reservoir of hope and possibility for those who do not know Jesus as Lord and Savior. As ministries of social justice are implemented, it should increase participation among the members and an increase in attendance of those who have not dawned the doors of the church. The church is grateful for this ministry project and look forward to the day when it will contribute significantly to the improved quality of life for those who live within the community.

Reflecting on the journey toward the Doctor of Ministry degree, one must admit that personal growth and transformation that has occurred. Certainly, compassion and awareness of the needs of others have intensified as this project developed. Taking time to examine what God was doing in my life has been a tremendous lesson in critical reflection. Examining the various foundational areas of the program confirmed that the church is positioned to maximize its position as a soul saving station and social justice

advocate for the community the church is located. We are not alone and the issue of social injustice has plague the community for many years. Our hope is to begin to reverse the number of people who are affected by social injustice and provide a safe haven for those who wish to improve the quality of their lives through association with the church.

If this project were to be done again, extending the time to teach and expose members to the benefits of providing social justice ministry would be implemented. The more members who are aware of social justice ministry and its benefits will increase the possibility of growing the church and collaborating with agencies in the community working to change the conditions of the have not's.

Significant to the development and implementation of this project is the degree to which it can be replicated in other congregations. The first step toward replication is to showcase how social justice ministry makes a difference in the life of Allen Chapel. Once pastors and ministry leaders see the possibilities that are available to them, they would be interested in doing likewise. Social justice ministry is not about competition or being the largest or most popular congregation in town, rather, social justice ministry in an effort of the church to do what God requires and be our brother/sister's keeper regardless of the circumstances they find themselves in.

Providing pastors and their ministry leaders a copy of this project will allow them the ability to modify and contextualize the program to meet the needs of their congregation. The end goal would be more congregations participating in the fight against injustice. When the church comes together to meet the relevant needs of the community, the kingdom of God will grow and the quality of life of those affected will greatly improve.

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